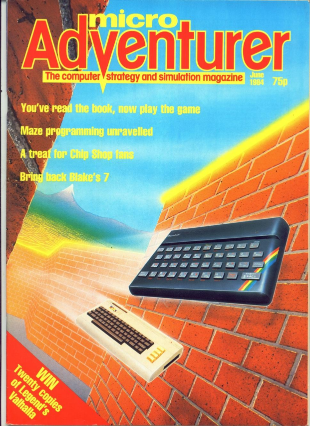


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– *Which Micro?, Feb 84*

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ADVENTURES • WAR GAMES • SIMULATIONS

EDITORIAL

IF YOU THINK Hercules Poirot spent too much time mastering English and not enough solving crimes, or the idea of galactic hitch-hiking appeals to you, then your luck could be in.

The chance to develop your own story-lines is arriving with the release of more and more packages of "bookware". The concept may sound clumsy (it's also referred to as "floppy books" and "interactive literature") but the packages certainly aren't — as fans of the Hobbit will be the first to point out. Perhaps a more accurate description is soft novels — you can mould their heroes and their adventures to match your own intuition and intelligence. Obviously the range of plots and characters available is limited by your micro's capabilities and by whether the software comes on cassette or disk. But you still have the chance to pursue a variety of plots and to be an active participant in the development of the story.

The American company Infocom pioneered the concept of interactive literature. Last November we described how its Interlogic Series of games uses advanced programming techniques to improve interaction between the player and the game itself, and next month we'll be looking in more detail at one of its science fiction games, Suspended. But UK firms are leading the way in providing combination book/software packages, with Mosaic Publishing looking set to follow Melbourne House's success with the Hobbit. The Unorthodox Engineers was its first piece of bookware — programmed by Keith Campbell and based on a science story by Colin Kapp. Next is the Width of the World, based on a new science fiction story by Ian Watson. Then follow Harry Harrison's the Stainless Steel Rat, Desmond Morris's Inrock and Terry Jones' the Saga of Erik the Viking, programmed by old favourites Level 9.

Other companies are also getting in on the act, such as Eighth Day Software with a package based on Stephen King's the Stand. Not forgetting, of course, book publishers Penguin which has found a few jewels with the Korth Trilogy and Warlock of Firetop Mountain. And more are on the way. Agatha Christie, Frank Herbert and Douglas Adams are just a few of the established novelists reported to be on the way to making their software debuts.

The possibilities are exciting and, given the rate of technical advance, nearly endless. But other reports bode less well. A company called Home Computer Software is releasing disk based novels which sound less than inspiring: Island Love and Your Championship Season are not titles to inspire confidence. Still it should be a lot of fun subjecting their characters to various (doubtless totally undeserved) indignities.

LETTERS

Send your hints, successes, complaints and compliments to Letters Page, Micro Adventurer, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 3LD

Call for Vic variety

I HAVE A Vic 20 and have solved Adventure International's Adventureland, Pirate Cove, Mission Impossible (Secret Mission) and I am still working on The Count.

I have also solved The Lair, from Soft Toys and many book adventures. I am still working on The Valley (ASP), The Dungeons (Anirog), which I have almost completed, and The Quest of Merravid. Although I enjoy adventures there does not seem to be enough variety in the Vic software.

So I appeal to Automata and Melbourne House to bring out versions of Pimania and The Hobbit for the Vic 20. I would even be willing to buy 32K for just one of these games.

Keith Wilson,
South Benfleet.

Two for . . .

THE BEST adventure game ever written for the Spectrum is, in my opinion, The Hobbit. In your adventure Contact Column many of the problems raised by readers are about this program. I have only just cracked the game, but only for a pitiful score of 65%.

However, if anyone wants to write to me (including an SAE) I will send them detailed notes of my journey (including how to get out of both dungeons). In return all I ask is for the people concerned to play the game and write to me again telling me of any points I may have missed.

The other point I wish to raise concerns a complaint about adventure games currently on the market. The term adventure is being used so liberally by advertisers I believe that there is no longer a dividing line between text-adventures and role playing games. For example I have seen Oracles Cave advertised as a graphical adventure. But I think that a more appropriate description would be a role-playing adventure, as it would be less misleading.

Accurate descriptions should be a basic requirement in the promotion of software. It should be stated whether a game is purely an RPG or text.

I recently spent £7.95 on Oracles Cave only to find that it was not what I was looking for. Is this my fault or the fault of the advertiser? This just goes to show that learning by mistakes can be expensive.

Clifford Harding
97 Blandford Rd,
Beckenham,
Kent.

THE MIDDLE Earth Rune Translator in the April issue of Micro Adventurer had a bug in it. Line 20 has READ K$. This should read READ C$.

I totally disagree with T. Swain (letters, April). I think that The Hobbit is one of the best adventures still around. Perseverance is all that is needed along with careful reading of the book.

I have noticed that it is somehow possible to evaporate the black river. Can any reader tell me what the reason for that is? I am prepared to help people with The Hobbit, if they can help me with Valhalla.

Paul Houbart,
12 Cambridge Rd,
Southport,
Merseyside.

. . . and one against

HOW I agree with Mr Swain (letters, April). I too find that The Hobbit is either too clever or has not survived the transition to the BBC.

Not only do I dislike the features that he described but I also find the program crashes at random points. Does anyone else have this particular problem?

What a contrast to the well thought out Acornsoft and Level 9 adventures. They are worth every penny and provide hours of mental effort. (I'm still stuck on Kingdom of Hamil).

Mary Fisher,
Wick,
Caithness.

Prompt for new role

A FEW small printing errors appeared in my article "New role for micros" in the April issue (pages 14-18). Though small, they are rather fundamental, and change the text rather dramatically in at least one case.

Under the sub-heading "Impartial mind", the last word in the first line should of course be "not" and not as printed "now".

Under the sub-heading "Character generation", the second paragraph should commence: "The generation of characters exploits the micro's best attributes. The author has written a simple but detailed program for the Spectrum 48K which generates the six basic attributes of a D & D character, gives the character a random (but pronounceable) name, automatically rejects any weak characters..."

On page 17, under the sub-heading "Three sections", the fifth paragraph has come a little unstuck. However, this is clarified in the program illustrated on page 14, so should not be too confusing.

Also on page 17, the last three lines of the first and second columns have become mixed. The end of column one should have read: "Using such a concept, information could be passed over in what appears to be a very realistic and chatty fashion. A typical programming technique..." And the end of column two should have read: "The topic is only mentioned here so that I can build up in your minds the concept of a complementary set of computer based game aids..."

Finally, again in column two on page 17, the second and subsequent paragraphs must have puzzled many readers, coming as they did without the sub-heading "An automatic map" which should have preceded them.

Gren Hatton,
Kilsby,
Rugby,
Warwicks.

ON THE subject of gremlins, a section was also missed out of Laurence Miller's April article on war gaming (pages 20-30).

The third whole paragraph in the second column on page 30 should have ended "...but can see on the board the exact situation of not only his own units but those of the opposition at a level normally applicable to a squad, platoon, company or brigade commander. It also means that instead of having to locate opposing forces before committing one's own, they are laid out in clear view. As an example of this, during Napoleanic times the supreme commander, Napolean himself, for the French would give his Corps commanders detailed instructions as to where they should be at the start of a battle and more general instructions as to how they should respond to the actions of the enemy."

Our apologies to readers and authors alike.

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"Here's another one looking for the golden key to open the dragon's cave, I'll bet!"

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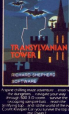


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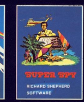
All these adventure games are also available in Cassette format for 48K Spectrum.



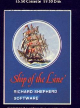
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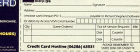


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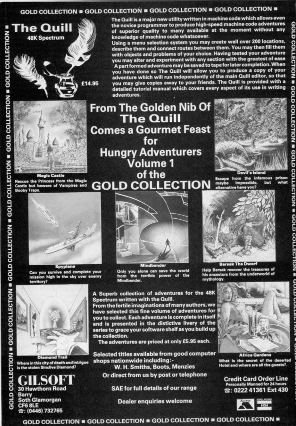
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Beyond beckons Midnight Lords

ACCORDING TO Beyond Software there are three original characteristics that go toward making Lords of Midnight the "thinking person's computer game."

The player's routes are no longer decided in advance by the programmer, you adopt more than one role. And not all the scenery is predrawn and stored in the memory of the Spectrum.

Beyond call Lords of Midnight, which was launched in the first week of May, an epic game as distinct from an adventure. They say an epic follows an adventure theme but the player's various roles mean that the game is taken further.

The story is partly set out in a book which program author Mike Singleton wrote. But there are so many possibilities allowed for in the game that Beyond plan to publish a novel using events that have occurred in actual player's games.

Mike, known for his play-by-mail games Starlord and Starnet, spent seven months working on Lords of Midnight, perfecting the special technique it utilises called landscaping.

With this technique the program knows where a given character is on the map. It checks which direction you are facing and draws the whole scene, foreground to background, in perspective. So each time you leave a location and return to it from a new direction, the place will be drawn again with a different background.




Beyond Software's Lords of Midnight — grim stuff

If you move forward the landscape will change with distant peaks becoming mighty mountains flanked by dark forests.

In the game you take the part of Lord Luxor, the Moon prince. You lead armies in their battle against the evil Doomdark.

As Luxor can visit up to 32,000 locations on his quest, he splits his forces for expediency, and it's through the eyes of his major warriors that you also may play.

On the Level

FOLLOWING the success of its clue sheet for Colossal Adventure, Level 9 is offering similar help on all its adventures.

The Level 9 clue sheets provide alphabetical lists of the objects, creatures and trickiest locations in each of its adventures.

They have up to 580 entries, so Level 9 reckons "your answer certainly should be there". And they're free to players who send a SAE to Level 9, 229 Hughenden Rd, High Wycombe, Bucks.



Shards highlights

SHARDS Software intends to keep busy this summer.

For the Spectrum it's releasing Galilee, a £7.95 sequel to Jericho Road, scheduled for June. At the same time and price, but for the Dragon, there's Operation Safras (the word that apears at the end of Pettigrew's Diary, although this is in fact a "prequel") — included is a single of instrumental music, also written by Shards.

Later this summer, at £6.95 and again for the Dragon, a follow-up to the Empire is scheduled. The working title is Empire 2 — Shards would like to have called it The Empire Strikes Back, "however we can foresee a few problems arising from such a title".

Already available is a BBC and Electron version of the Dragon adventure Java Star at £7.95.

Orienteering avenues

MANY DEVOTEES of The Forest, a computer game about orienteering published by Phipps Associates, have been intrigued by the refence to a more complex forest on the program menus.

Now a detailed map is available for this more complex forest and it can be seen that the new territory is as different from the original as chalk is from cheese.

Giant fjords and lakes have appeared along with steep sided valleys and a small wooded island in the middle of the largest lake. This scenery is more like that found in Scandinavia, the home of the sport of orienteering.

Many people have also been intrigued to know how the 5,600 square kilometres of territory have been fitted into the memory of a 48K Spectrum computer complete with features, control points and contour lines.

The Forest — expanding

They have been amazed to discover that you never run off the edge of the map and that 74 kilometres by 75 kilometres is an awful lot of space to get lost in, particularly when your map only covers an area 2 kilometres by 2½ kilometres.

Exactly how this is done is still a trade secret but a retrofit of another 5,600 square kilometres has to be good news for enthusiasts.

The new map is only available by mail order from Phipps Associates, 172 Kingston Road, Ewell, Surrey 01-393 0283. It costs 85 pence including postage. It is available separately from the program itself, which costs £9.95 including the instructions book and the basic map.

GOLD COLLECTION ■ GOLD COLLECTION ■ GOLD COLLECTION ■ GOLD COLLECTION ■ GOLD COLLECTION ■ GOLD COLLECTION ■



Adding to the Ten

IF TEN Mysterious Adventures have whetted your appetite for more, then Digital Fantasia is happy to oblige with another three — plus a medieval strategy game.

First of the three is Waxworks which takes you on a day to the seaside. All that fresh air makes you tired so you doze off when you visit the Waxworks — and then the adventure really begins.

Next is Midwinter, with the Earth enveloped in another Ice Age. Your challenge is to solve the mystery of the big freeze. Life has taken another turn for the worse in After the Fire — in which you search for survivors of the nuclear holocaust.

All three Mysterious Adventures, plus the rest of the series, are available for the BBC, Spectrum 48K and both Oric machines, at £9.95 each.

Feudal Overlord is for the Spectrum 48K, at £6.95. A simulation of medieval strategy for up to four players, the game involves running a medieval estate and rising through the ranks to become overlord.

Dragon duo

TWO DRAGON adventures have arrived from Microdeal, whose arcade game The King has dominated the Dragon software charts.

Dungeon Raid is written by US programmer Ken Kalish while The Touchstone — featuring 11 levels and four mazes — takes you through the chambers of the Temple of Ra. Each costs £8.00.

Zork trilogy gets a boost

THE ZORK bandwagon keeps on rolling.

Commodore is offering the trilogy on disk at £11.99 for each part, while Penguin is releasing three books based on the adventure.

Zork was written by the US software house Infocom, and UK prices have previously tended towards pocket-stretching levels.

In the first part of the adventure, the aim is to find the 20 treasures of Zork. Part two pits you against the Wizard of Frobozz. The third part culminates in an encounter with the Dungeon Master himself.

On the Tebbit trail

SOFTWARE WRITER Roger Taylor has produced another adventure written in the same mode as Denis Through the Looking Glass. It is called The Tebbit, not to be confused with The Hobbit.

The text adventure is divided into three sections. You first must take control of a character known as The Tebbit, who, says Roger, hides under gooseberry bushes.

"You then have to search for all the necessary Tebbit assets, such as intelligence, a pained expression and a distinctive hairstyle," said Roger.

"After visiting various places where you can acquire these qualities, such as hospitals and zoos, you are then set a Tebbit initiation test."

As a fully fledged Tebbit it is your task to defeat the dreaded Scarg (Arthur Scargill) and then to seek out the illusive monetarists dream of success.

The Tebbit is available for the Spectrum 48K, Commodore 64, Atari and soon the BBC B.

Runic

DORIC'S software is not for the Oric — hence a change of name to Dorcas Software. But it is for the Commodore 64 as well as the Spectrum 48K.

Nearing completion is a 64 version of Oracle's Cave, reviewed on the Spectrum last December, involving a search through the Oracle's complex of caves. Our reviewer was impressed enough to comment on the "superb high resolution, with smooth scrolling".

Dorcas promises even better things from the Runes of Zendos, due soon for the Spectrum. Runes "develops the text/graphic approach which proved so popular in The Oracle's Cave and includes many new superb features".

Valhalla graphics improved

Legend's John Peel

COMMODORE 64 owners should be receiving their copies of Valhalla now after slight problems with the program's translation held early orders up for about three weeks.

The managing director of Legend, John Peel, said all those who had placed early order had been notified of the delay.

He said 64 users could look forward to a livelier version of Valhalla.

"The life-like backgrounds and improved, flicker-free animation, are the main advances," John said.

The world's first computer movie, as Legend describes it, is set in the world of Norse myths. In each of the six adventures it is your task to find a hidden treasure.

While the 64 version will be sold for £14.95 including the 48-page booklet, a disk version will not be availble in the UK.

"The 64 conversion project has attracted much interest in the US. We are negotiating a six-figure licensing fee with two-multi-nationals," John said.

John is tight-lipped about Valhalla II, but said it would be out some time this year.

"It will be another adventure movie but an advance on Valhalla I. We are looking at the possibility of releasing it simultaneously on the Spectrum and Commodore 64," he said.

Strange happenings in town

MANY PEOPLE reckon that there's little sense of reality around Westminster at the best of times, but it's due to be suspended entirely this August.

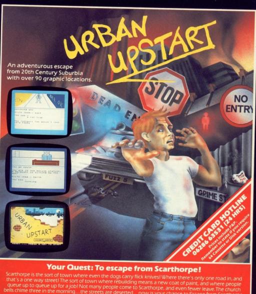
From the 6th to the 11th the doors will be open to Earth Space Port London — better known as Central Hall Westminster. Once through Customs you'll be teleported aboard the Starship Ultima which will be in Earth orbit. Inside the ship there will be trade cabins to visit and entertainment concentrating on science fact and fiction.

Space Port organiser

The organisers intend to "put into this event as much as is feasible to stretch your imagination". There will be background engine noise, and the view through the portholes features star fields receding into the distance.

Your "passport" costs £5.00 a day (half price for children accompanied by an adult) — but check ticket availability with the organisers, Spacers of 24/25 Foley St, London W1 (telephone 01-631 4589).

"ADVENTURES INTO IMAGINATION"



RICHARD SHEPHERD SOFTWARE

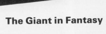
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Jason Orbaum devises mind-bending maze programs

MAZE n. CONFUSING and baffling network of winding and inter-communicating paths with hedges on either side, designed as a puzzle for those who try to find their way in it.

Mazes always have been, and probably always will be, an integral part of the adventure. Mazes are puzzles loved by one and all, from Henry VIII who had one constructed in his palace at Hampton Court, to the owner of the house in the film *Sleuth*.

An adventure is not a complete adventure unless it has a maze and several examples of these mazes can be found.

In the Hobbit the misty mountains are a superb example, difficult to map, easy to get lost in, and each described only slightly differently if at all. This game also employs the hardest trick an adventure creator could use: an object in the maze.

In the Hobbit there seems to be little use for the object, but in the underrated Calixto Island, published by Dragon Data for the Dragon 32, the objects needed to get across to the island are found in the maze.

The latter maze is strange and illogical. The player can move south and west several times and then a single move north will take them back to where they started.

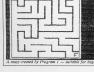
Novice

The maze in Zork II, Infocom's adventure for the Apple, Atari etc, consists of many oddly shaped rooms, while in Urban Upstart, by Richard Shepard Software, the hospital forms a very small but neat maze. This maze employs another nice trick in that it contains an object which is needed to escape.

In *The Adventure Game* on BBC 2 the latest series gives the contestants two mazes. There is the Dark maze where an Infra Red camera is used to direct the lost, and the graphic three-D maze as used on the BBC computer around which the superb animal is "Driven".

But how does the novice programmer, who is writing simple Basic adventures, store his mazes? The simplest way is in an array where the dimensions match exactly those of the maze. In each element you then store a number corresponding to the exits from that location.

The way the number is calculated is using the product of primes in which each item that could be found at a given location is assigned a prime number (a number which will not divide by any whole number except 1 and itself). The numbers are then multiplied for the location number.



A maze created by Program 1 — suitable for beginners

A maze created by Program 2 provides more of a challenge

For example if we take it that we are making a maze with exits north, south, east, and west, from each location, with treasure and/or monsters at some locations, the first step is to give all of these items a prime number, ie:

Exit	2
Exit South	3
Exit East	5
Exit West	7
Treasure	11
Monster	13
Exit	17

To define any room from here is easy. If we want a room with exits north and east, and a monster, we simply multiply the primes for these items:

North		East		Monster		
2	*	5	*	13	=	130

If the exit has paths leading north, south and west and has a monster guarding a treasure the sum is:

North		South		West		Monster		Treasure		Exit
2	*	3	*	7	*	13	*	11	*	17

and the result is 102102. If the exit is at location 8,4 (eight along and four down) then just assign the value of 102102 to the array element (8,4). This is how the mazes are stored in all the accompanying programs.

There are six programs, numbered A1-3 and B1-3. If you own a Dragon 32 any program A will work with any program B. Otherwise, you will have to use program B3 only, which is written in standard Microsoft Basic and should fit any machine.

There are three beginnings and three endings, making a total of nine different possible programs. Each program A defines a maze and each program B takes the data in the array MZ and acts on it. They can be treated as initialisation and control programs respectively.

Coding

Program A1 allows the programmer to design his or own mazes. In all of these examples the mazes are generated on a 10 by 10 grid and there are six options in each location. These are beginning, ending and exits in all four standard directions. The maze is entered as DATA statements in lines 500-600 and for each location a string of the options available at that location is entered where:

N	EXIT NORTH	(PRIME 7)
S	EXIT SOUTH	(PRIME 5)
E	EXIT EAST	(PRIME 3)
W	EXIT WEST	(PRIME 2)
B	EXIT BEGINNING	(PRIME 11)
F	EXIT FINISH	(PRIME 13)

Lines 100 to 180 set MZ(X,Y) by a simple process of multiplying the number one by the prime number for each of the options. This is the coding section of the program.

Program A2 keeps the prime numbers for each of the options and this time they are assigned randomly to each location. Flags ST and EN are set when a start ▷

```
10 CLS0
20 DIM MZ(9,9)
30 FOR Y=0 TO 9
40 FOR X=0 TO 9
50 REM set array
60 GOSUB 100
70 NEXT X,Y
80 GOTO 1000
100 EX=1 READ M$
110 IF INSTR(1,M$,"N")<>0 THEN EX=EX*7
120 IF INSTR(1,M$,"S")<>0 THEN EX=EX*5
130 IF INSTR(1,M$,"W")<>0 THEN EX=EX*2
140 IF INSTR(1,M$,"E")<>0 THEN EX=EX*3
150 IF INSTR(1,M$,"B")<>0 THEN EX=EX*11
160 IF INSTR(1,M$,"F")<>0 THEN EX=EX*13
170 MZ(X,Y)=EX
180 RETURN
500 REM data
510 DATA WE,SEW,WE,WE,WE,WE,WS,ES,WE,WS
520 DATA S,N,SE,SW,SE,SW,NS,NS,E,NSW
530 DATA NSE,WE,WN,NS,NS,NS,NS,NE,W,NS
540 DATA NSE,WE,WE,WEN,WN,NS,NSE,WE,SW,NS
550 DATA NSE,WE,WE,WS,SE,NW,NE,W,NS,NS
560 DATANSE,WE,SW,NS,NE,WE,WE,NW,NS
570 DATA NS,S,N,N,SE,WE,WE,WES,WE,NW
580 DATA NS,NSE,WES,WE,WEN,WE,WS,NE,WE,SW
590 DATA NS,N,NE,WES,WE,WS,NE,WE,SW,N
600 DATA NE,WE,WE,NW,E,WEN,WE,W,EN,WF
```

Program A1

```
10 CLS0
20 DIM MZ(9,9)
30 FOR Y=0 TO 9
40 FOR X=0 TO 9
50 SOUND (Y+1)*20+X*2,1
60 GOSUB 100
70 NEXT X,Y
80 IF ST=0 THEN MZ(0,0)=MZ(0,0)*11
90 IF EN=0 THEN MZ(9,9)=MZ(9,9)*13
99 GOTO 1000
100 EX=1
110 IF RND(3)=1 AND Y>0 THEN EX=EX*7
120 IF RND(3)=1 AND Y<9 THEN EX=EX*5
130 IF RND(3)=1 AND X>0 THEN EX=EX*2
140 IF RND(3)=1 AND X<9 THEN EX=EX*3
150 IF RND(100)=1 AND ST=0 THEN EX=EX*11:ST=1
160 IF RND(100)=1 AND EN=0 THEN EX=EX*13:EN=1
170 IF EX=1 OR EX=11 OR EX=13 THEN GOTO 110
180 MZ(X,Y)=EX
190 RETURN
```

Program A2

◁ or finish is entered so that these only crop up once.

Line 170 makes sure that there is at least one exit from every location. Lines 80 and 90 put a start in the top left hand corner and a finish bottom right if none have been assigned by the program (if the flags are still clear).

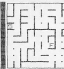
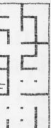
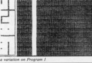
This program generates mazes that are frequently impossible and contain one way passages. Although it is good fun, especially with program B1 it is not really suitable for common use in adventures.

The problem is that the one way passages are too difficult and so we must not only set the exit in the current location but also in the neighbours. If the program decides there will be an exit east from location 2,3 it must also set a location west from location 3,3.

Translation

Program A3 does just this. It is not much of a modification on Program A2 and should be easy to convert. The main difference is that all the array elements must be set to one at the start. The programs are fairly self explanatory and for the non Dragon owners an explanation of a couple of commands may help in translation.

SOUND NOTE, DURATION is the syntax for the SOUND command so all line

A maze created by Program 3 — a variation on Program 1

```
10 DIMMZ(9,9):FORN=0TO9:FORM=0TO9:MZ(N,M)=1:NEXTM,N
20 FORY=0TO9
30 FORX=0TO9
40 SOUND (Y+1)*20+X*2,1
50 GOSUB 100
60 NEXT X,Y
70 IF EN=0 THEN MZ(9,9)=MZ(9,9)*182:MZ(9,8)=MZ(9,8)*5:MZ(8,9)=MZ(8,9)*3
80 IF ST=0 THEN MZ(0,0)=MZ(0,0)*165:MZ(0,1)=MZ(0,1)*7:MZ(1,0)=MZ(1,0)*2
90 GOTO 1000
100 EX=1
110 IF RND(4)=1 AND Y>0 THEN EX=EX*7:MZ(X,Y-1)=MZ(X,Y-1)*5
120 IF RND(4)=1 AND Y<9 THEN EX=EX*5:MZ(X,Y+1)=MZ(X,Y+1)*7
130 IF RND(4)=1 AND X>0 THEN EX=EX*2:MZ(X-1,Y)=MZ(X-1,Y)*3
140 IF RND(4)=1 AND X<9 THEN EX=EX*3:MZ(X+1,Y)=MZ(X+1,Y)*2
150 IF RND(100)=1 AND ST=0 THEN EX=EX*11:ST=1
160 IF RND(100)=1 AND EN=0 THEN EX=EX*13:EN=1
170 IF EX=1 OR EX=11 OR EX=13 THEN 110
180 MZ(X,Y)=MZ(X,Y)*EX
190 RETURN
```

Program A3, which sets a location west from 3,3

```
1000 REM draw maze
1010 PMODE 4,1:PCLS:SCREEN1,1
1020 LINE(9,9)-(112,112),PSET,BF:LINE(0,125)-(255,191),PSET,BF
1030 FOR Y=11 TO 101 STEP 10
1040 FOR X=11 TO 101 STEP 10
1050 LINE(X,Y)-(X+9,Y+9),PRESET,B
1060 NEXT X,Y
1070 FOR Y=0 TO 9
1080 FOR X=0 TO 9
1090 EX=MZ(X,Y)
1100 IF EX/7=INT(EX/7) THEN LINE(X*10+12,Y*10+11)-(X*10+19,Y*10+11),PSET
1110 IF EX/5=INT(EX/5) THEN LINE(X*10+12,Y*10+20)-(X*10+19,Y*10+20),PSET
1120 IF EX/3=INT(EX/3) THEN LINE(X*10+20,Y*10+12)-(X*10+20,Y*10+19),PSET
1130 IF EX/2=INT(EX/2) THEN LINE(X*10+11,Y*10+12)-(X*10+11,Y*10+19),PSET
1140 IF EX/11=INT(EX/11) THEN DRAW "C0BM"+STR$(X*10+13)+","+STR$(Y*10+13)+"R5L5D
2R5D3L5C1"
1150 IF EX/13=INT(EX/13) THEN DRAW "C0BM"+STR$(X*10+13)+","+STR$(Y*10+13)+"R5L5D
3R3L3D2C1"
1160 NEXT X,Y
1170 DRAW"BM 130,10R5D5U2L5U3D5U5BR8D5BR3U5R5D2L5M+5,+3"
1180 DRAW"C0BM5,185U50F25E25D50BR15U25E25F25L50R50D25BR15BU50R50G50R50BR15U50R50
BD50L50U25R25C1"
1190 LINE (135,20)-(140,110),PSET,BF
1200 X1=0:Y1=0:FORX=0TO9:FORY=0TO9:EX=MZ(X,Y):IFEX/11=INT(EX/11) THEN X1=X:Y1=Y:
X=10:Y=10
1210 NEXT Y,X
1220 X=X1:Y=Y1
1230 PLAY"T255L255O1CDEFGDEFGO+CDEFGDEFGO+CDEFGDEFGO+CDEFGDEFGO+CDEFGDEFGBAGFEDC
O-BAGFEDCO-BAGFEDCO-BAGFEDCO-BAGFEDC"
1240 TIMER=0
2000 LINE(135,20+INT(TIMER/25))-(140,20+INT(TIMER/25)),PRESET
2010 IF TIMER>2250 THEN GOTO 3000
2020 A$=INKEY$:IFA$=""THEN2090
2030 EX=MZ(X,Y):X2=X1:Y2=Y1:X1=X:Y1=Y
2040 IFA$=CHR$(8)THENIFEX/2=INT(EX/2)THENX=X-1
2050 IFA$=CHR$(9)THENIFEX/3=INT(EX/3)THENX=X+1
2060 IFA$=CHR$(10)THENIFEX/5=INT(EX/5)THENY=Y+1
2070 IFA$=CHR$(94)THENIFEX/7=INT(EX/7)THENY=Y-1
2075 IF A$="A" THEN GOTO 3000
2080 IFX1=X AND Y1=Y THEN X1=X2:Y1=Y2:SOUND1,1 ELSE EX=MZ(X,Y):IFEX/13=INT(EX/13
)THEN4000
2090 LINE(X1*10+15,Y1*10+15)-(X1*10+18,Y1*10+18),PSET,BF:LINE(X*10+15,Y*10+15)-(
X*10+18,Y*10+18),PRESET,BF
2100 GOTO 2000
2110 GOTO 2110
3000 REM time has run out
3010 A$="ACDEFGBEFDCFEGDADEFCDFGCAEGDBGEFDDAFEGFDDEAFGECDAEFEDCDFEBDGFECACCCCDDD
DEEEEFFFFGGGGAAAABBBBAAAAGGGGFFFFEEEEDDDDCCCCDECDECDECDECDECDECDECDECDEFGEFEGFGF
GEGGEGEGEGFEGFFGFGFEGFGFGBGBGBABABABCDCDCDEDEDEFEFEFFGFGFGBGBGBBBABAACACACDAEFEB
DCEFDBD"
3020 CLS0:PRINT@236,"TIME'S UP!";:PLAY"O2L255T255XA$;"
3030 GOTO 5000
4000 REM made it to the exit
4010 A$="CDEFGFEDEBCADFEGACDEFGABCEDEDFAGGEFACDEFBAGFECADEFGEEGFACCCCDDDDEEEEFFF
FGGGGAAAABBBBAAAAGGGGFFFFEEEEDDDDCCCCCDEFGABCDEFGABCDEFGABCDEFGABCDEFGABCDEFGABC
DEFGABCDEFGABCDECDECDEDCEDECEDEEDEFAFAGAFAGABFFBFGBFGBFGFBCDAEFEGFADCEBFDGEDEFCD
AEFEGEBCADFEGE
4020 CLS0:PRINT@235,"WELL DONE!";:PLAY"O5T255L255XA$;"
5000 REM another game
```

```
5010 PRINT@448,"ANOTHER GAME";:INPUT A$
5020 A$=LEFT$(A$,1):IFA$<>"N"ANDA$<>"Y"THENPRINT@448,"":GOTO5010
5030 IFA$="N"THEN CLS:PRINT"PROGRAM OVER.":PRINT"(C) J. ORBAUM 1983.":PRINT"BASI
C.":END
5040 PRINT@448,""
5050 PRINT@448,"SAME MAZE";:INPUT A$
5060 A$=LEFT$(A$,1):IFA$<>"N"ANDA$<>"Y"THENPRINT@448,"":GOTO5050
5070 IF A$="N" THEN RUN
5080 GOTO 1000
```

Program B1 in which the maze is drawn and the decoding is carried out

```
1000 REM set up adjectives
1010 DIM A$(9)
1020 FOR N=0 TO 9
1030 READ A$(N)
1040 NEXT N
1050 DATA A VAST,A EMPTY,A BEAUTIFUL,AN OLD,A NOISY,A GRAND,A TINY,A NARROW,A MA
JESTIC,A BRILLIANT
1060 ROOT=RND(90)
1070 MX=0:MY=0:FORX=0TO9:FORY=0TO9:EX=MZ(X,Y):IFEX/11=INT(EX/11) THEN MX=X:MY=Y:
X=10:Y=10
1080 NEXT Y,X
2000 REM control routine
2010 GOSUB 3000:REM describe
2020 GOSUB 4000:REM get command
2030 GOSUB 5000:REM check for   start or finish
2040 GOTO 2000
3000 CLS0:CHAR=RND(7)*16+143
3010 PRINTSTRING$(32,CHAR);
3020 FORN=1 TO 14
3030 PRINTCHR$(CHAR);STRING$(30,128);CHR$(CHAR);
3040 NEXTN
3050 PRINTSTRING$(31,CHAR);
3060 POKE 1535,CHAR
3070 A=SIN(MX*10+MY+ROOT)
3080 A$=STR$(A)
3090 A$=MID$(A$,5,1)
3100 A$=A$(VAL(A$))
3110 PRINT@68,"YOU ARE NOW STANDING IN ";
3120 A$=A$+" CAVERN"
3130 A=LEN(A$)
3140 PRINT@144-INT(A/2),A$;
3150 PRINT@229,"exits"+CHR$(128)+"lead";
3160 ADD=246
3170 EX=MZ(MX,MY)
3180 IF EX/7=INT(EX/7) THEN PRINT@ADD,"north";:ADD=ADD+32
3190 IF EX/5=INT(EX/5) THEN PRINT@ADD,"south";:ADD=ADD+32
3200 IF EX/3=INT(EX/3) THEN PRINT@ADD,"east";:ADD=ADD+32
3210 IF EX/2=INT(EX/2) THEN PRINT@ADD,"west";
3220 RETURN
4000 PRINT@418,"WHICH WAY NOW (N,S,E OR W) ?";
4010 A$=INKEY$
4020 A$=INKEY$:IF A$="" THEN 4020
4030 IF A$<>"N" AND A$<>"S" AND A$<>"E" AND A$<>"W" AND A$<>"n" AND A$<>"s" AND
A$<>"e" AND A$<>"w" THEN SOUND 1,1:GOTO 4020
4040 IF (A$="N" OR A$="n") AND EX/7=INT(EX/7) THEN SOUND 200,1:MY=MY-1:RETURN
4050 IF (A$="S" OR A$="s") AND EX/5=INT(EX/5) THEN SOUND 200,1:MY=MY+1:RETURN
4060 IF (A$="E" OR A$="e") AND EX/3=INT(EX/3) THEN SOUND 200,1:MX=MX+1:RETURN
4070 IF (A$="W" OR A$="w") AND EX/2=INT(EX/2) THEN SOUND 200,1:MX=MX-1:RETURN
4080 SOUND 1,1:GOTO 4020
5000 IF MZ(MX,MY)/13<>INT(MZ(MX,MY)/13) THEN RETURN
5010 CLS0
5020 PRINT@234,"YOU'RE OUT!";
5030 P$="CDEFGABCDEO+":FORN=1TO5:PLAY"O1T255L255XP$;XP$;XP$;XP$;":NEXTN
5040 PRINT@448,"":PRINT@448,"ANOTHER GAME";:INPUT A$
5050 A$=LEFT$(A$,1):IF A$<>"Y" AND A$<>"N" THEN 5040
5060 IF A$="N" THEN CLS:PRINT"PROGRAM OVER.":PRINT"(C) J. ORBAUM 1983.":PRINT"BA
SIC.":END
5070 PRINT@448,""
5080 PRINT@448,"SAME MAZE";:INPUT A$
5090 A$=LEFT$(A$,1):IFA$<>"N"ANDA$<>"Y"THEN 5070
5100 IF A$="N" THEN RUN
5110 GOTO 1060
```

Program B2 gives a traditional text description of each location

```
1000 REM set start
1010 CLS:MX=0:MY=0:FORX=0TO9:FORY=0TO9:EX=MZ(X,Y):IFEX/11=INT(EX/11)THEN MX=X:MY
=Y:X=10:Y=10
1020 NEXT Y,X
1030 PRINT:PRINT:PRINT"CO/ORDINATES - (";MX+1;",";MY+1;")."
1040 PRINT"EXITS ";:EX$=""
1050 EX=MZ(MX,MY)
1060 IF EX/7=INT(EX/7) THEN EX$=EX$+"NORTH,"
1070 IF EX/5=INT(EX/5) THEN EX$=EX$+"SOUTH,"
1080 IF EX/3=INT(EX/3) THEN EX$=EX$+"EAST,"
1090 IF EX/2=INT(EX/2) THEN EX$=EX$+"WEST,"
1100 EX$=LEFT$(EX$,LEN(EX$)-1)+"."
1110 PRINTEX$
1120 PRINT:INPUT"WHICH WAY NOW";A$
1130 A$=LEFT$(A$,1)
1140 IFA$<>"N"ANDA$<>"S"ANDA$<>"E"ANDA$<>"W"THENPRINT"INVALID DIRECTION.":GOTO 1
120
1150 IF A$="N"ANDEX/7<>INT(EX/7) THEN PRINT"WAY BLOCKED.":GOTO 1120
1160 IFA$="S" AND EX/5<>INT(EX/5) THEN PRINT"WAY BLOCKED.":GOTO 1120
1170 IF A$="E" AND EX/3<>INT(EX/3) THEN PRINT"WAY BLOCKED.":GOTO 1120
1180 IF A$="W" AND EX/2<>INT(EX/2) THEN PRINTWAY BLOCKED.":GOTO 1120
1190 IF A$="N" THEN MY=MY-1
1200 IF A$="S" THEN MY=MY+1
1210 IF A$="E" THEN MX=MX+1
1220 IF A$="W" THEN MX=MX-1
1230 IF MZ(MX,MY)/13=INT(MZ(MX,MY)/13) THEN 1250
1240 GOTO 1030
1250 PRINT"WELL DONE.   YOU'RE OUT."
1260 INPUT "ANOTHER GAME (Y/N)";A$
1270 A$=LEFT$(A$,1)
1280 IF A$<>"N" AND A$<>"Y" THEN GOTO 1260
1290 IF A$="N" THEN CLS:PRINT"PROGRAM OVER.":PRINT"(C) J. ORBAUM 1983.":PRINT"BA
SIC.":END
1300 INPUT "SAME MAZE (Y/N)";A$
1310 A$=LEFT$(A$,1)
1320 IFA$<>"N" AND A$<>"Y" THEN GOTO 1300
1330 IF A$="N" THEN RUN
1340 GOTO 1000
```

Program B3 translates to most machines on the market

40 does is makes a beep that increases in pitch as the maze is defined. CLS N clears the screen to colour N, colour zero is black. If no colour is specified the screen clears in black.

INST (N,TS) searches string S$ for the first occurrence of T$ starting at position N. The function is used in this case to see whether the letter is present (if it is not then INSTR returns a zero). A short subroutine could be written on other micros to do the same.

Stored

Program B1 is too Dragon-dependent to warrant translation unless you have a very good knowledge of the machine. But for Dragon owners it shows one use of the array. Lines 1000-1160 draw the maze itself, the de-coding is done in lines 1090-1150. The program is simply a race against the clock to get from S to F, the screen display with maze A1 is shown in figure 1.

Lines 5000 onwards allow you to play another game with either the same or a different maze, obviously this option is only of use if you are using programs A2 or A3. Program B2 is also very Dragon oriented and gives a more traditional text-description of each location rather than drawing it. The program incorporates several programming tricks which may be of interest to the serious adventure programmer. There are 10 standard adjectives which are used to describe the caverns and passageways. These are held in line 1050. They are stored in the array A$(N) and lines 3070-3100 are the lines of interest. The trick used here will only work on machines with floating point arithmetic capabilities.

Any function can be used in line 3070 if it is not important. What is important is that the function does not generate a number with a decimal point in position 4 ie 456.567834. The routine works on the assumption that the SIN of a given number will always be the same and, therefore any digit in that number will be the same for the location. It is difficult to explain, but easy to understand.

Complex

The program also shows how a good adventure should be formatted with lines 3130 and 3140 centering a line of text that has variable length. Program B3 is not really very inspiring, but it will translate to nearly any machine on the market. There is no use of the ELSE clause in an IF . . . THEN statement and none of the Dragon's graphic or sound commands are utilised.

Spectrum owners will have to change lines 1130, 1270, and 1310 to A$=A$(1) but I cannot see any other changes that will be necessary. The programs as printed (apart from B1 and B2 which will only run on a Dragon 32) will run on most floating point micros BBC, Dragon, Oric, Vic-20, Commodore 64.

This is one way of including mazes in your programs. It is not the most memory efficient, but for the average programmer it is quick, relatively easy and allows tremendous scope for complexity.□

Battling with history

***Laurence Miller** samples some of the war games available for popular micros such as the Atari, Commodore 64, IBM PC and Tandy*

HAVE YOU ever wondered what happened on December 16, 1944 when a desperate offensive was launched against the Allies, or have you ever mused over our victory at Waterloo and how it was accomplished?

Maybe you've already re-fought these classic engagements — when you had an opponent available or perhaps you're just curious as to why adults play with toy soldiers. If any of these apply to you then wargaming with computers awaits.

As usual, any mention of war conjures up an image of blood-crazed lunatics getting enjoyment from suffering and death as any casual glance through the computer press will show. What we are looking at are wargames, serious strategic and tactical conflict simulations that are more likely to produce anti-war sentiments, as you comprehend the realities of battle, producing ill-informed people who react to key words, confusing arcade shoot-ups with simulations.

The titles covered herein succeed, to a greater or lesser degree, in providing historical simulations and 'what-if' studies and are only games in the sense that chess is a game. To succeed in this type of gaming it is necessary to think about and plan your actions with some care, as a hasty decision will undo you just as surely as it would any commander.

There are certain requirements for the production of wargames which have provided limits on the quantity of different games as well as the machines for which they are produced. It takes a different type of effort and combination of skills to produce a good computer wargame compared to those required for most other wargames.

In most cases, an interest in history (particularly military history), an appreciation of strategy and tactics combined with knowledge of probability theory together with programming skills are all necessary. Combine this with the up to three or more man-years of work in the best wargames and a far more limited market than arcade games and the reason for few good titles on UK machines compared to US computers becomes obvious.



The best range of wargames on any micro exists for the Apple — mainly from one specialist company called Strategic Simulations Inc together with a few titles from other companies such as Avalon Hill (mainly the later releases), Broderbund and Epyx.

Some of SSI's Apple titles have been released on other machines such as Atari, Commodore 64, IBM PC and Tandy whilst others are undergoing conversion and even being targetted initially on them. Rated as introductory and available on all these machines are The Battle of Shiloh and Tigers in the Snow.

Shiloh covers the great American Civil War battle for Tennessee and sets the Confederates the task of capturing Pittsburg Landing against a stiff Union defence which, although outnumbered, needs only hold out until 11 reinforcement brigades arrive.

Machine opponent

This task is relatively easy but not without losing the game due to heavy casualties. Considering that this is an introductory game, it performs well as an historical simulation with a human player on each side, but when one side is computer controlled the designer has used an unbalanced method of compensating for the computer's limitations.

The machine opponent has an unsophisticated method of dealing with movement and, to counteract its inefficiency, it gets to move units twice as far as a human player. Since this battle is predominantly concerned with manoeuvre this method of compensation causes a major change in strategy away from the courses historically chosen.

Despite this flaw, it is a well designed product which can give many hours of interesting gaming especially as it contains a variety of options. It is possible to play either the first day of the battle or the entire two days with the Union forces being given an extra 75 points as a holding measure in the one day scenario. It is also possible to vary the strength of the forces on each side to alter the play balance if you start to find the game too easy.

Overall The Battle of Shiloh is engrossing as you are constantly watching for enemy weaknesses whilst making decisions concerning your own forces. It is an ideal introduction to serious wargaming as well as holding interest for the experienced gamer. It is available for the Apple, Atari, Commodore 64, TRS-80 and IBM PC at £29.95.

Since the inception of board wargaming, few subjects have received such intensive coverage as the German counter-offensive which commenced in the Ardennes during December 1944 and is possibly better known as the Battle of the Bulge. Tigers in the Snow is a tactical simulation of the campaign for one or two players also designated as introductory but probably tending towards intermediate complexity.

The computer can play as either Allied or German in the solo option but whether one or two player, the sequence of play is identical and follows some of the traditionally accepted methods of wargaming — German movement, German attacks, Allied movement, Allied attacks, reinforcements (if applicable), victory status and the option to save the game or continue.

Victory points are given on a one for one basis for unit losses together with bonuses for specific locations — Marche, Rochefort and Bastogne (historically St Vith should have been included) together with control of the map edges.



When combining play options are provided for varying the strength levels of each side from one to nine with five representing original levels. This allows players to bias a game in favour of a weaker player to achieve a more balanced game and, when experienced, to amend the computer's forces for similar reasons. The computer does an excellent job of removing the tedious element from wargaming — the many tables that a player normally has to refer to in the course of a game, as well as providing an automatic run through of every unit, offering each one for movement or combat.

While at first sight the once-through call off for movement or combat imposes awkward strategy limitations, this soon proves to be untrue as it is possible to defer any unit's action and the computer will return to it until told otherwise. Combat resolution is handled with a range of results from attrition and no advance or retreat to outright elimination (either defender or attacker depending on odds), advance after combat and an option for a second combat.

Units cannot stack (share the same location) which accurately reflects the limited road network and movement problems present in the Ardennes. Individual units have zones of control which can impede enemy movement, prevents retreats and block supply lines (unless such an area is occupied by a friendly unit) with units unable to retreat suffering additional losses.

For those unfamiliar with the terminology of zone of control the diagram below may clarify.

```
     Z
Z         Z      Z represents a ZOC
     U           (Zone of Control)
Z         Z
     Z           U represents a Unit.
```

Wherever a unit is present the areas marked Z represent an area under the control of the unit U. Such areas are subject to attack by the unit with the result that opposing units are subject to a penalty for entering the area. This can be extra movement points to pass (representing the extra difficulty of movement whilst under enemy fire), inability to retreat (troops trying to retreat from superior fire will usually not move to an area under enemy control) and lack of supply as the enemy can interdict such movement.

Each unit also has a combat state which ranges from 0 to seven and changes depending on units movement: downwards if moving, upwards if stationary. This represents, in an abstract way, the difficulties of movement on the poor Ardennes road net with the incredible congestion of German columns and its concomitant traffic and unit control allowing small elements of US infantry to force powerful panzer and support elements to deploy, causing further disruption with an accompanying decrease in operational efficiency.

Play proceeds smoothly with an average computer-player taking no more than six or seven minutes (frequently as little as three minutes) with player interaction necessary for defensive operations and artillery interaction. Since player interaction is necessary during each battle, this time passes quickly and quite often seems inadequate as the player is also planning strategy and tactics while uninvolved in movement and attack.

Overall, Tigers in the Snow is enjoyable as a design showing the improvements in the integration of wargames and computer software. It provides a beginner with a real challenge and meets the solitaire needs of gamers while still being adjustable to suit the more experienced wargamer. If you try or have tried either of these games and want more, then SSI have other titles available of about the same level and ranging up to very complex.

Prime reason

For those of you without access to the computers and software above, I hope to cover games for Spectrum, BBC, Oric/Atmos and others in future articles with a look at Lothlorien, Red Shift and CCS, who seem to be the main wargame producers in the UK.

If you're impatient to start then try Johnny Reb, Apocalypse, Paras or Rebel Star Raiders (this is SF but is a superb man-to-man close combat simulation) amongst others.

If you don't have a computer yet then I hope this article will help your decision, especially if your involvement in strategy games provides a prime reason for computer acquisition. For those of you who already have a micro, there will be a selection of games from introductory to advanced with coverage of the most popular machines in the UK as well as those computers with the best range of wargames in later articles or reviews.

If I haven't mentioned your machine or your company's software, I apologise but I don't own every machine available and there is too much software released for me to notice all that is available so write and tell me about it (or send review copies) care of *Micro Adventurer*. This should enable me to cover them in future articles or reviews. □

Bring back Blake's 7

Kerr Eastman *looks back at the characters in Blake's 7 — next month the action*

AS THE CIRCLE of Federation guards closed in, Avon stepped astride Blake's body and looked down at him. He looked up again, bringing the gun to his shoulder, ready to fire. Avon smiled, the image froze and faded. A single gunshot rang out followed by seven answering shots. The final credits rolled.

So ended the four year, 52 episode run of the BBC space opera Blake's 7. It was a series that infuriated a few but enthralled many. All over the world its fans started clubs and held conventions. They're still doing it, there's even a convention this year in America where, to my knowledge, the programme has never been broadcast.

In this article I'm going to take a retrospective look at the series and with the benefit of hindsight I hope to bring to light a few of the reasons for its success. For those who know it well I hope my comments will provoke further thought if not complete agreement. To those unfamiliar with the series I can only hope to whet your appetite so you will pester the BBC into repeating the whole series.

Footballs

What were the unique qualities that made Blake's 7 different enough to attract the interest it has? As with most low budget attempts at science fiction on television or film, production values were mixed. It sometimes looked superb but the sets tended to look tatty at the edges. Occasionally very obviously model space ships would wobble their way across the screen on highly visible wires in front of planets that looked suspiciously like painted toy footballs. In its favour the first three series did have what was to me one of the best spaceship designs ever to grace the small screen. The Liberator was always immediately recognisable, gleaming white with its three spiked outriggers and the green glowing propulsion dome. Inside it looked just as good, the sets conveying an impression of sophistication and power with a definite hint of the alien origin of the ship. All without a cathode ray tube in sight.

The quality of the individual scripts varied considerably from ludicrous Saturday morning serial or cartoon stuff to some good, imaginative and witty writing — often jumping from one extreme to another from one week to the next.

All this, however, is of secondary importance. From my point of view what made the series special was its characters — the way they reacted to each other and their situation, and the way they developed within a story-line that progressed throughout the entire four series. Unlike most other similar programmes around at the same time (such as Buck Rogers), it really mattered what order the episodes were shown in. Characters actually referred to events in previous episodes. In this respect it was almost a serial, although an individual episode was always complete in itself.

The heroes of Blake's 7 were in themselves unusual characters. Freedom fighters, mercenaries, smugglers, convicted child molesters, thieves and murderers are perhaps not the usual choice of authors writing a SF adventure series.

Figureheads

Rog Blake, played by Gareth Thomas, the leader of the group referred to in the title of the series, was a figurehead of a freedom movement on Earth, destroyed at the start of the series. Rather than create a martyr by killing him, the authorities on Earth, centre of the Terran Federation, fabricated evidence of child molesting to discredit him, and sentenced him to transportation to a penal colony. Blake had possibly the most reason to hate the Federation. As well as being aware enough to see the wrong in the drug-numbed autocratic society that formed the heart of the Federation, his entire family had been killed by the authorities after his involvement in a previous attempted rebellion. He had then been turned by drug treatment into a "model" citizen. His memory of involvement in the freedom movement was removed, but began to return after he witnessed the massacre of the rebels at the beginning of the series.

Justifying his fight he once said to Avon and Jenna: "The administration on Earth is totally corrupt. There are thousands of incidents every day where simple human rights are ignored . . . I want to get the administration back into the hands of honest men."

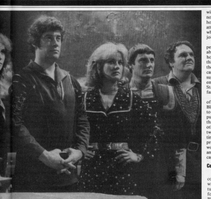
Of the main characters Blake's was the most straightforward, the most certain in his attitude towards the Federation. He was determined to rid the galaxy of its rule. However, he was human enough, more so as the series progressed, to realise the chaos, destruction and death that would occur after a sudden release from the Tyranny of the Federation.

From the left: Vila, Cally, Blake, Jenna, Avon and Gan with

Gareth Thomas had one of the hardest jobs making this straightforward hero a believeable character. He succeeded in injecting subtle nuances into what in the hands of another actor could have become very dull. Like most of the original cast he had had considerable experience in the theatre and it was to this he returned with a season at the Royal Shakespeare Company after he left at the end of the second series. He came back in the last episode of the third series and of course the very last episode Blake.

Vila Restal, played by Michael Keating, was the first of the "seven" to introduce himself to Blake. He did this by stealing Blake's wristwatch while Blake was unconscious in the transit cell where they were both waiting to be transported to the penal colony on Cygnus Alpha. He returned it when prompted by another character after Blake had woken up. Apparently, unable to stop his urge to express his genius for theft by stealing anything and everything, the Federation had condemned him to a life on Cygnus Alpha.

Vila's character is best described by some of his own words: "I steal things. It's not my fault, you understand . . . I mean it's compulsive you know . . . I've elevated stealing into an art form . . . There isn't a lock I can't open; if I'm scared enough . . . A thief isn't what I am it's who I am."



...nd Gan — with Zen, the computer in the background, making seven

with the multi-million dollar film, definitely not an auspicious start. The following week, however, Blake started to fight back with an attempted takeover of the London during which we met two more people who were to join the seven.

Kerr Avon, played by Paul Darrow, is perhaps the most difficult character to write about, if only because I'll be lynched by hordes of Avon fans if I say the wrong things. His character has almost certainly the most fans. Avon's background and career gave him a personality based on the supremacy of logic and the repression of emotion (parallels here with Mr Spock of Star Trek, another great favourite with fans).

A computer genius, he was to prove one of Blake's greatest assets, but also possibly Blake's greatest threat. He followed Blake to begin with because it suited his own purposes. All through the first two series the threat of Avon deserting Blake and the others was always present. Only in the later two with Blake gone did the effect of his time with Blake begin to show. As the series progressed the emotional repression grew worse as his own failures, real and imagined, and his guilt turned him into the person capable of killing Blake by the last episode.

Corruption

In response to Blake's statement on the corruption in the Federation Avon came up with an answer that sums up his own attitude: "You won't find me risking my life for the masses . . . Use your intelligence Blake, just look out for yourself."

Of emotion he once said: "I have never understood why it is necessary to become irrational in order to prove that you care, or why it should be necessary to prove it at all." His ideas about the group were just as cynical: "Is it that Blake has a genius for leadership or merely that you have a genius for being led?"

Avon was on the prison ship London because of his nearly successful (or so he thought) attempt to defraud the Federation banking system of five million credits. In the attempt to take over the London he aided Blake by crippling the ship's systems after they had taken over its computer room.

Paul Darrow played Avon with the right degree of subtlety and self control, without going over the top with what was a very much larger than life character. A lot of the way the character developed can be put down to the way he played it in the early episodes. If anything there was a loss in the subtlety of his performance as the series progressed but this was paralleled by the severe strain the character was increasingly put under.

The second of the two Blake met for the first time on the London was Olag Gan, played by David Jackson. Gan was the group's strongman and ironically the shortest lived of the original group. His strength had put him on the London: he had killed the Federation Guard who raped his girlfriend. The Federation had placed a limiter in his skull to prevent him killing again and sentenced him to transporting ▷

It's also been said that he was "easily led, weak willed and a quite rational coward". This though is very much a simplification, for Vila's character is quite complex. All through the series moments of extraordinary bravery would break through the surface veneer of cowardice. He was, as well, perhaps the most emotionally sensitive of all the characters using his fool act to either inflame or defuse the frictions between the others, depending on his mood.

Comic

Michael Keating played Vila with extraordinary verve and superb comic timing. Together with Avon, Vila was given some of the best lines in the series; his portrayal of the intelligent fool was one of the major factors in the development of the series above its competitors.

Jenna Stannis, played by Sally Knyvette, was the next of the seven to meet Blake — like Vila she was in the transit cell waiting to be taken to Cynus Alpha. She was a smuggler and an expert pilot, being transported for trading in prohibited cargoes. Vila said of Jenna: "They've been trying to nail her down for years . . . She's a pretty big name — what you might call the criminal's criminal." She was to become the Liberator's main pilot and one of Blake's staunchest followers, although she maintained a somewhat sardonic and realistic attitude to the group's activities. Beyond this the emotional side of her character was mostly concealed. The result was a sympathetic character which one yearned to know more of — something we were deprived of when she left the show at the end of the second series. In the last episode Blake revealed her final fate: "She tried to run the blockade once too often . . . She hit the self destruct. When it blew she took half a squadron of gun ships with her." Going out in style.

Sally Knyvette made Jenna convincing despite the lack of emotional depth given to the character in the scripts. Most of the other characters were given at least one episode in which a lot of their background and character was established. Almost certainly Jenna missed out only because of her premature departure.

As the first episode drew to a close, Blake, Vila, Jenna and the rest of the prisoners were herded aboard the prison ship London, which left Earth headed for Cygnus Alpha. On seeking the disc that was Earth slowly disappearing on the view screen, Blake announced: "I'm coming back, somehow I'm coming back."

The first episode was transmitted in January 1978 on a Monday evening opposite Coronation Street, less than two weeks after the premier of Star Wars in Britain. It was an obvious target for critical comparison

AMAZING GAMES

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BY DAVID HARRISON

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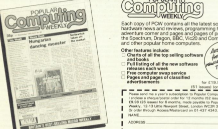
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◁ with the rest. He showed great courage making use of his strength to help others in the group. Though, by his own admission, not very bright, he was strong on common sense.

Never fond of Federation guards he said to one on the London when trying to open a handprint activated door: "It's just your hand we need, if you want to stay attached to it do as you're told." When asked if he would stay with Blake, he gave this eloquent assessment of his situation: "I want to stay alive and to do that I need a few people I can count on. If it ever comes to kill or be killed I can't win on my own . . . I can defend myself up to a point but the limiter makes me incapable of killing."

Vila summed up Gan's character when he said after Gan's death: "He was straightforward. Wasn't always expecting to be double crossed. Not like us. He trusted people. He trusted Blake completely." David Jackson, an experienced actor in both television and theatre, played the simple strongman with great sympathy even though Gan rarely had much dialogue and, like Jenna, little was done to introduce much background to the character.

The attempted takeover of the London failed after the ship's Second Officer started to shoot the remaining prisoners not involved in the attempt. Appalled by the killing, Blake surrendered.

Meanwhile the London had passed the edge of influence of a large alien space battle. One of the alien ships was discovered drifting, apparently undamaged, near the London. After contact had been lost with two crew members who boarded the ship, Blake, Avon and Jenna were sent aboard. The ship, however, had a rather special psychological defence system. Blake, his mind having withstood so much tampering before, managed to overcome the defence system leaving them in control of the ship. Jenna then managed to move the ship out of range of the London.

Sophisticated

Blake was now in possession of a ship which appeared to be far more sophisticated and powerful than anything the Federation possessed. He named it Liberator. Together with the ship's computer, which answered to Zen, it would form the sixth member of the group. Blake announced: "We're going to follow the London to Cygnus Alpha. We're going to free the rest of the prisoners. And then with a full crew, we're going to start fighting back!" So ended the second episode Spacefall.

The third episode, Cygnus Alpha, detailed Blake's attempt to free the prisoners on the penal colony. It also marked the first use of the Liberator's teleport, a versatile matter-transmitting system enabling Blake and his group to arrive and depart from situations at great speed. The episode ended with Vila and Gan joining Blake, Avon and Jenna on board the Liberator. Thus at the end of the third episode only one of the seven remained missing. She was to appear first in the fourth episode, Time Squad. Meanwhile on board the Liberator, Blake was ready to strike back at the Federation!

Cally, played by Jan Chappell, was a telepath from the planet Auron. When Blake met her in Time Squad she was the last remaining guerrilla fighting against the Federation on Saurian Major, a planet used by the Federation as its communications relay centre. Blake had chosen the relay centre as his first point of attack. The Federation had wiped out the rest of the resistance on Saurian Major by releasing a short-life virus which killed off all native humanoids. Cally, having a slightly different metabolism, survived. She was ashamed of her failure against the Federation and of the fact that she alone had survived.

When Blake met her she was planning a suicide mission against the communications centre and explained her situation thus: "I should have died with the others. My death was delayed by a freak. There's no point in putting it off any longer." After helping Blake destroy the communications centre she joined the group, completing the seven.

Cally was often the conscience of the group. She was certainly the most humane, despite being, as she once bitterly remarked, "not quite human". Her telepathic ability often proved useful; she was usually able to communicate telepathically with the rest of the group. They couldn't, however, communicate with her this way. This made her vulnerable emotionally, always feeling alone without the voices of others like her in her mind. The loneliness left her open to any outside influences with telepathic ability. On several occasions the group was drawn into events after Cally's telepathic nature attracted the attention of an alien intelligence.

The bad guys: Servalan and Travis

A non human character can be incredibly difficult to portray convincingly whilst still allowing an audience to relate to that character. It is this that often leads to the accusations of "cardboard" characterisations in science fiction in general. Although physically very much human, Cally was mentally different. Many writers got round this by keeping Cally in the background of the action or using her in situations where her differences in character wouldn't show. When they did use her abilities as a major part of the storyline the results varied considerably.

Jan Chappell, however, managed to make something very special of the character even when it was misused. Although her part often lacked the sparkling dialogue often presented to Avon and Vila there was always that something in her performance which made Jan stand out as Cally. When the writing rose to the level of the performance it resulted in some of the best episodes of the series. From this it may be gathered that I'm a Cally fan; not, as far as I'm concerned, without good reason.

With the group complete the majority of the rest of the first series was concerned with either Blake's increasingly bold attacks or evading the pursuit ships the Federation inevitably sent after them. It was during the first of these later attacks that we were introduced to Blake's two main antagonists.

Enemies

Servalan, played by Jacqueline Pearce, was Supreme Commander of Space Command, directly responsible to the High Council and the President for the capture of Blake and his group. There were very strong parallels between Avon's and Servalan's characters, leading on their meeting to the development of an increasingly complex love/hate relationship, with neither of them trusting each other's motives (usually deservedly so), yet each having a powerful attraction for the other.

She once said to Avon: "I don't think of you as an enemy, Avon; I think of you as a future friend." On Terminus after Avon realised Servalan was behind the messages bringing him there, Avon said to Servalan: "If it was a trap it had to be yours. The precise planning, the meticulous detail, the general flair, who else could it be?" Servalan replied: "Thank you. That you of all people should appreciate my work is very flattering."

Jacqueline Pearce's Servalan was the perfect sparring partner for Paul Darrow's Avon. It's rare that a woman has the chance to play a power crazed "tasteless meglomaniac" and Jacqueline Pearce carried it off with great panache, getting more and more outrageous as the series progressed.

Space Commander Travis was played in the first series by Stephen Greif and in the second by Brian Croucher. Travis was the antithesis of all Blake stood for. His disregard for human life had even led him into trouble with the Federation. Travis's eye and arm had been seriously injured by Blake during Blake's first involvement with the resistance movement. He had vowed to kill Blake, a vow which led him eventually to betray all humankind to the aliens from Andromeda. Blake's and Travis's relationship was well expressed in the following conversation. Travis: "You'd better kill me Blake . . . Until one of us is dead there'll never be a time when I won't be right behind you." Blake: 'And if not you, then somebody else . . . Killing you wouldn't change anything. You don't matter enough to kill, Travis."

Stephen Greif made Travis a really nasty evil character with a superb air of menace. Brian Croucher's interpretation tended to emphasise the increasingly insane side of Travis's character. Although different both physically and in character, neither portrayal seemed out of place. Only when episodes from each series are seen together do the changes tend to jar slightly. □

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Fortunate find for BBC

Adventure *Wheel of Fortune* **Micro** *BBC B* **Price** *£9.95* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Epic Software, 10 Gladstone St, Kibworth Beauchamp, Leicester.*

AT LAST we have an adventure worthy of the BBC Micro. I have played and reviewed many adventure games for this machine but until now each game had some drawback which prevented me suggesting that you dig deep into your treasure chest and pay your hard-earned Elfin gold for some over-priced, interior game. This game, however, must be the front runner for all BBC micro adventures.

The game features Teletext graphics at every location, a full sentence command analyser and wandering characters with a will of their own. To solve many of the problems in this game you must persuade the inhabitants fo this world to assist you in your task. You may speak to these characters by enclosing your commands within speech marks (eg "What time is the next bus and where does it leave from").

The game is set in a traditional adventure setting of caves, magic and trolls. And sure enough there is the usual Golden Firkin which you must recover.

In this case it's a jewel-studded Silver Wheel of Fortune, which you are seeking along with any other priceless bauble you happen to stumble over.

A further fascinating feature of the game is its ability to move without you. At first I thought it was me who had accidently pressed a key while thinking which had caused the game to suddenly react but, no, I found that should you wait too long the rest of the cast act by themselves.

As you would expect this tends to increase your problems as no one seems to be on your side. My only note of caution about this game is that it is hard. Looking back, now that I know some of the answers, I agree that all the solutions are fair and logical but they are a bit fiendish.

This game is a large leap forward for Epic Software. I have played some of their earlier games, which I must confess I did not like, but this game must now become a yardstick but which future adventures should be measured.

I gather, from speaking to the author, that Epic is a small company that doesn't spend vast amounts on advertising and packaging, but what do you want: a large padded cassette box and a glossy advert or a terrific game? **AM**

SOFTWARE INVENTORY

What's on the way in the adventure world — if you have a new adventure, war game or real-life simulation which you are about to release send a copy and accompanying details to Software Inventory, Micro Adventurer, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 3LD

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Blackstar maintains tradition

Adventure *Castle Blackstar* **Micro** *Spectrum 48K* **Price** *£8.95* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *SCR Adventures, 190 Shelbourne Rd, Tottenham, London.*

THE goddess Artemis has mislaid an important orb. She'd like you to go and look for it. As per union rules, anything else you can loot is yours to keep. Suddenly you find yourself in a wooded valley beside a dusty road.

This, in glorious black-on-white, is the none-too-original beginning of Castle Blackstar, a traditional text adventure set in a familiar pseudo-medieval fantasy world. Not too promising at first sight, perhaps, but persevere because this is an excellent, absorbing, detailed and tough adventure.

The heart of a text adventure is the quality of descriptions and puzzles, and both are first-class in this, the first of the Artemis Quests. There are a few unfortunate spelling errors here and there, but not enough to detract from the rich and convincing atmosphere built up in the wild countryside, deserted castle, subterranean catacombs, underground lake and so on.

If purple prose turns you puce there is a useful command which switches out the full description of locations already visited, leaving only the name (Kitchen, South Tower for instance).

A large area can be explored with little difficulty, and many interesting things lie about unguarded. Working out what to do with them is another matter, though, and I found the solutions to problems not as hard to identify as what the problems actually were.

If you get killed, the goddess appears to revive you, but three resurrections seems to be her limit.

I was particularly impressed by the integration of some objects into the room descriptions themselves, not simply wheels which turn and buttons which press, but things you can get and take away. This helps increase the atmosphere substantially and makes it vital to read the descriptions carefully.

Castle Blackstar is well-documented and offers a query service as well as T-shirts for the first 50 finishers. It's a shame you have to reload every time you quit or expire, but I found loading quick and reliable, so this wasn't the problem it might have been. If you like traditional text adventures, this will do very nicely. **DD**

Oil rigs and kingdoms alike

Simulation *North Sea Oil* **Micro** *Dragon 32* **Price** *£5.75* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Shards Software, 189 Eton Rd, Ilford, Essex.*

THIS game is yet another variation on the infamous Kingdom, which incidentally was far more enjoyable to play than most of its modern variants.

Admittedly the kirfgdom has been well disguised and mutated into a North Sea oil rig, but the basic principles remain the same.

If you do not like these kinds of games avoid North Sea Oil at all costs. If you do enjoy them then you should also avoid it, as the game, although prospectively brilliant, lacks the quality that makes a game addictive.

To get down to basics (no pun intended, although the game is written in that language), the game loads with a hi-resolution title page. This is a facility that has been used brilliantly by Microdeal whose title page for Cuthbert in the Mines is indeed breathtaking, but here, the title page leaves one wondering if perhaps something better could be achieved.

This fault seems apparent throughout the program, which has superb potential, not exercised properly.

Once the game has loaded you are presented with a low res title page (Is this necessary after the player has just ▷



◁sat through a hi-res one?) and the game proper begins with the first choices.

You are asked to spend $1,000,000 exactly, and to divide it between drilling consumables, maintenance spares, food and charter births. The program, if correctly planned, would total your first three inputs and then subtract these from your total of a million to give you your final allocation; ie for charter births.

However, the program does not do this. If you have entered numbers that do not total exactly 1,000 (as all entering is done in units of $1,000) the game makes you re-enter everything.

The game then enters stage two, an exercise in bearings, and a particularly boring one. You enter Course and Knots, and the program plots your course taking into account both wind and tide.

The longer you take to reach Dragon Delta, (your oil rig) the more cargo, bought in stage one, you lose.

This section of the game is great to look at, as a superb map is drawn of the North Sea, but it makes stage one of the game positively superb, so far as interest goes, and the first part is enough to bore any half-intelligent person to tears.

Presumably there are now those who think that I hate this game, this is in fact not true, but it infuriates me to see what is, in essence, a good concept spoiled by lack of care and irritating faults.

A good example of an irritant comes at this point. Each time you reach Dragon Delta, a very off-beat repetition of the M*A*S*H theme is played. Now to hear a piece of music slaughtered once is enough, but over and over again just becomes unbearable.

The third part of the game then starts with you allocating your crew to the jobs of drilling, maintenance, and service. You are then told how many wells you can drill and you proceed to move your oil well at snail's pace around the North Sea to drill.

After this comes a detailed report of what you did right or wrong, a display of your bank balance and a return to stage one of the game.

The computer performs a cold start on RESET and is BREAK-protected, but it can be broken into when you are inputting numbers. If you do not want another game the program returns you to basic with itself still present and listable (and, I presume, SAVEable).

The game suffers from lack of care in nearly all departments, except for that of map artist. Come on Shards, let's have something of Pettigrew's Diary standard again. **JO**

Finding the lost gnomes

Adventure *The Lost Gnomes* **Micro** *Spectrum 48K* **Price** *£5.95* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Eric Bean Adventures, 9 St Luke's Close, Kettering, Northants.*

THIS IS the first adventure I've seen that was written with the aid of Gilsoft's Quill. It is probably a fair representation of what can be achieved with this program, being well constructed and bug free, but not all that exciting.

You have to discover the whereabouts of the lost gnomes and you do so in the standard way, by typing in two-word commands and wandering through a network of rooms, some underground and some above. The map and the room descriptions show the limitations of the compiling program: they are generally rather short descriptions and you can tell from 95% of them whether there is a clue held there or not.

As this is so easy the non-clue rooms seem a waste of time, as in most adventures where locations are added without even giving a maze to the map. After a while they begin to feel like padding.

So the map also seems reasonably average. The mazes, such as they are, are extremely easy to solve and there is hardly any difficulty at all in wandering around from place to place.

It seems that The Quill enables the construction of competent average adventures but the only originality can come in the plot, the clues and the objects. In these areas I found the adventure more impressive. None of the clues are very tortuous, but some are quite difficult, and care has been taken to provide a reasonable outcome for some of the more likely mistakes. I especially like the ferret that turns out to be a major treasure. (I'm not giving

Solo challenges for sharp customers

Adventure *Encounter* **Micro** *Sharp MZ-700* **Price** *£6.95* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Solo Software, 51 Broad St, Worcester.*

HAVING TRIED two of Solo's other offerings, and found them to be no more than average, I was not expecting much from Encounter, but soon discovered I was wrong.

This is the first proper adventure that I have seen for any Sharp machine and I found it challenging, interesting and enjoyable.

The object of the game is to find and rescue a young maiden who has been kidnaped and is being held captive in the House of Doom. Your task is, of course, made difficult by all manner of problems, some of which are very time consuming and difficult to solve. This game is definitely not for the impatient.

The instructions included in the game are quite brief but most micro users are familiar with this type of adventure. Little is given away, and much has to be discovered in the course of the game.

Apart from the usual N,S,E,W, Up, Down, abbreviations to three letters are accepted. Some commands are unique to certain situations and are very obscure. Calling for help is of no use.

This is a text-only adventure which is clear and well expressed. The vocabulary, though quite small, is adequate. Each location is well described and you soon become familiar with the geography.

The locations consist of the House of Doom and the surrounding grounds and countryside. It is advisable at first to go round purely for investigation. Once you have made a map and a list of what you come across, then you can begin to piece things together and try things out.

For once, there are no monsters and you don't have such worries as points for intelligence, dexterity etc. There is a limit of 500 moves, but this is enough as long as you are not expecting to explore, solve the problems and win all in one go.

One criticism: the publishers have left the all-BASIC listing totally un-protected and at times the temptation to cheat becomes overpowering. It is, of course advisable, not to, unless you want to defeat the object of the game. Also, cheating is a time consuming business with almost 1000 program lines totalling around 34K.

The price of £6.95 is reasonable for a moderately sophisticated text-only adventure and Encounter is certainly very difficult to solve. In fact I found it almost impossible. **RT, AT**



anything away here).

So all in all this is a reasonable but unremarkable game. I've certainly seen worse and this does have the advantage of being completely self contained and error free (apart from the usual misspelling). You should get a pleasant evening's entertainment from this game, or a fair introduction to the nature of adventures if you are new to the field. But anyone seeking the latest thrill or mind-twisting complexity will be sadly disappointed by the Lost Gnomes. **NW**

Testing driving skills

Simulation *Knight Driver* **Micro** *Spectrum 48K* **Price** *£5.95* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Hewson Consultants, Hewson House, 56B Milton Trading Estate, Abingdon*

KNIGHT DRIVER, by Hewson Consultants, is a driving simulation which requires a red car to be driven round a narrow track. This becomes quite fiddly after a while, especially as the keys produce slow response.

Instead of four direction keys there are two keys which swivel the car clockwise and anti-clockwise, and two keys for accelerate and brake, all of which are conveniently displayed on the loading picture. This method of swivelling the car is fine at the start, but when the car turns round and comes backwards it gets a bit confusing.

There are two skill levels: learner and professional. In learner mode there is a fuel limit, whereas in professioanl mode only four crashes are allowed but there is no fuel limit. Each has its disadvantages. In learner mode the car has to be driven at full speed making it difficult to stay on the road. In professional mode the car must be driven very carefully, made more difficult by the awkward control.

The screen is split into three sections: a score section, a section in which is displayed a picture of a car and the game section. Despite being well set out, the graphics, and indeed the game itself, is rather simple. Instead of a head-on three D view, like the pole position-type games, the player is presented with a plan of the track which scrolls as the car moves. On either side of the track are extremely simple trees and houses — looking distinctly user-defined and amateur in style.

Thus far, although the responses are a bit frustrating, the game has been quite playable. The player is curious to see more of the track and to explore more features, producing a just-one-more-game syndrome. As I ventured into this land I expected to see more interesting features, like fuel cans, road works, or even petrol stations, but my curiosity was cut short when I saw the finishing line, where the track started again. After that I didn't feel like playing much because all the excitement had gone, only having lasted half an hour. The game was fun for a while, but I wouldn't call half an hour's play good value at £5.95.

With the already excellent standard of Spectrum software rising every week, I am rather surprised that Hewson Consultants think they have a chance of selling many copies of a game of this calibre. **MG**

Tough task in space

Adventure *Marooned!* **Micro** *Vic 20 16k* **Price** *£4.50* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Buntasoft, 149 Monks Walk, Buntingford, Herts.*

Who? I must admit that I had never heard of Buntasoft until Marooned! arrived and so I loaded this program in out of sheer curiosity, more than anything.

The program takes ages to load, but then it is nearly a RAM pack-full, and leaves you with a whole 152 bytes spare, so this is understandable.

First comes the BASIC header loader page, which plays a lovely little ragtime ditty as the game loads. ▷

Graphic display of Armageddon

Strategy *Armageddon* **Micro** *Commodore 64* **Price** *£9.95* **Supplier** *Visions Software, 1 Felgate Mews, Studland St, London.*

VISIONS describe this game as one for the family, designed for two to four players.

The object is global dominance on the world map. Yes, sounds just the thing for a cosy family evening. Blast dad over tea and biscuits.

The game comes on cassette and you will need some knitting handy while you wait a full 20 minutes for it to load. Perhaps the turbo load method will spread soon. The usual SHIFT and RUN/STOP loads the game. The game loads in several parts so the screen flashes occasionally.

The game starts with a wonderful graphics display of the Steam Powered Computer Company logo. The next three screens set up the game by asking for the number of players (two to four) names of the players and selecting joystick or keyboard control. One warning; plug the joystick in to port one before loading the game, as connecting after the game has started may reset the 64. This is a little frustrating as you have to wait 20 minutes to reload the game.

Each player is assigned territories and given extra armies to deploy on their territories. Each player then has an option to attack or do nothing. To attack another army the cursor must be positioned over one of the territories you occupy. Then press the fire button and move to one of the enemy territories. The army you are attacking must be on an adjoining territory.

After setting up the attack, press the fire button and watch a glorious display of war. The display is always the same for an attack. After attacking, the results are shown and if you complete defeat an opponent you may move armies on to that territory.

After setting up the attack, press the fire button and watch a glorious display of war. The display is always the same for an attack. After attacking, the results are shown and if you completely defeat an opponent you may move armies on to that territory.

When you decide you have had enough of attacking or your armies are to thinly spread (no attacking with only one army) the next player takes over. And so the game continues until someone achieves world dominance.

For £9.95 you get a cassette with one copy of the game on each side, loading and playing instructions and some glossy packaging.

The idea behind the game is very good, but the game is very long and slow loading.



In play the displays are spoiled by a white square which remains on the screen and seems to have no purpose. This should have been tidied up. The game is also very slow to calculate the moves of the players. Overall it is probably good value for money, but there is better quality software available. **KB**

◁The adventure proper is a self-running BASIC program that has all the usual anti-break, POKEs to prevent lesser mortals from cheating, and is a well written text game. Most Vic text adventures I have seen take the same sort of format on screen, and this is no exception. The object is to recover from the planet that you have just landed on, which incidentally, appears to be called Paxar for no apparent reason, the necessary spare parts for the repair of your poor battered space craft.

The input is the usual noun and verb type, but has the singularly annoying feature of responding "I don't understand" to actions without giving you a clue as to what it is that you just entered in that is wrong.

The program falls short of user friendliness when you combine the facts that apart from the directions north, south, east, and west, the other action words have to be typed in full; and the singularly unhelpful HELP command is fond of responding with "You're doing OK" when you are thoroughly stuck.

Another thing that surprised me was the lack of game save facility, and the lack of the QUIT facility. This leaves you in the position sometimes of being thoroughly stuck, being unable to go forwards or backwards in the adventure, and also unable to quit. The only option is to pull the plug and reload. This is very time-consuming, but at least you get to listen to the little ragtime ditty again.

As adventures go, this is not easy to crack. I would certainly recommend it to a novice adventurer to wait a while before attempting it, but if you like toughies, then this is a stinker. There is far more to it than meets the eye. Everything has to be done in the correct order, and there are two points which are one-way only. If you don't have all the necessary bits when you cross these points, you get stuck, and with no quit facility it's back to the ragtime ditty again.

It took me three days to crack this game, which is slightly below average for me, but that is playing for four or so hours a day. At £4.50, the program is good value when one considers the complexity and degree of difficulty, and if Buntasoft can maintain the quality at this sort of price, then they won't go far wrong. **SS**

Help on the Hobbit is at hand

Book *A Guide to Playing the Hobbit* **Price** *£3.95* **Supplier** *Melbourne House Publishers.*

IF YOU'VE had enough of blundering aimlessly along the dark stuffy passages of the Goblin's Dungeon or being killed by loathesome creatures in the early stages of the Hobbit, then this book by David Elkan may be just what you need.

It's divided into three sections, each of which is slightly more revealing. The first is a general introduction, with strategies and hints on mapping, the rules of Inglish and so on. Much (though not all) of this is also contained in the instruction booklet provided with the game and should be familiar to you.

The next section though is rather more useful. It offers a sample route while expanding on the hints already available with the HELP facility and providing them when there are none in the game. Extra hints are coded, but it's tempting to jump straight to the last section where complete solutions are given.

The final section describes all locations in alphabetical order, listing visible exits and guiding you painlessly through every conceivable hazard.

If you follow the recommended route, checking the visible exits before going into them, you'll avoid the worst of the pitfalls, which all too frequently bring the game to an abrupt end.

Fortunately the Hobbit is not a fixed adventure with only one solution so the book does not spoil the fun of playing it. There remains an element of uncertainty and sometimes you won't be able to do what the book advises. I've been captured in the most unlikely places and frequently ignored by those who are supposedly my allies. On one occasion I had to make do without Bard who ought to have slayed the dragon, but must have decided he didn't like the idea because he made off in the opposite direction and never returned.

But it was the goblins' caves in which I found the most tantalising problem of the game, and here the book proved to be invaluable. But there's one dilemma: you're specifically advised not to wear the ring until you are clear of the caves, so that Thorin doesn't lose you and yet, if you don't you're recaptured time and time again. I decided to wear it, and, while I lost Thorin for good, I nevertheless succeeded in raising my score from a mere 20% or so to 72.5%.

I did come across one error. In the route from the dark winding passage to Beorn's house the second direction is given as 'down' whereas the game tells you that you can't go down. The result was that I got hopelessly lost and had to start all over again.

What the book cannot do is to predict which way the game will proceed each time you play it. You must be continually alert to the dangers and may have to abandon some suggestions, but it's still a real boon for anyone who feels lost in the early part of the game, as the dramatic increase in my own score shows. © John Fraser.

Getting about with graphics

Adventures *Sea Quest, Shenanigans, Calixto Island, Black Sactum* **Micro** *Dragon 32* **Price** *£7.95 each* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Dragon Data, Kenfig Industrial Estate, Margam, Port Talbot, West Glamorgan.*

WHAT'S GOOD enough for Scott Adams is good enough for Dragon Data, it seems, as they're re-releasing two established adventures, Black Sanctum and Calixto Island, with added graphics . . . and moving graphics, at that. This also applies to two new titles published with them: Shenanigans and Sea Quest.

Each location is illustrated, and most objects that you can GET or DROP are added to or removed from the basic scene, though don't expect too high a standard of artistic merit. The butterfly net in Black Sanctum could equally be a tennis racket or a fly swat. Some locations have background movement, such as clouds, or the fishes swimming past in Sea Quest, part of this adventure taking place underwater. Also, there are the movements caused by your instructions, such as OPEN DOOR or MOVE RUG, with an amended illustration appearing instantly on screen.

The background graphics, as opposed to some of the objects, are impressively done, showing what can be squeezed out of the Dragon, though unfortunately there isn't really room to squeeze an impressive adventure in too. No amusing responses to HELP or EAT RAVEN, for instance, as there simply isn't the spare memory. Nor are there spare objects — everything has a purpose, and it's not too difficult to match an object to the task facing you.

All four titles are similar in style, coming from the same US software house. The usual two-word commands are understood, the text scrolling up the five or six lines beneath the permanent picture. All conventional exits are indicated, though you must LOOK and EXAMINE everything closely, sometimes more than once, to reveal hidden objects and secret passages.

Sea Quest is much the better of the two newies, a 'bring back the treasures' adventure. You begin on a beach near a waterfall (an odd geographical combination), and discover a boat on the end of a dock. There's an off-shore island to investigate, if you can deal

with the pirate protecting it (OFFER SOFTWARE doesn't work), and an interesting feature is that as well as moving above the ocean, you can dive DOWN at any point to see what's beneath the waves — provided you have the equipment to do it. Pearls, statues and silver are among the treasures, with sharks and mermaids 'twixt you and the goodies.

In Shenanigans you must find the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow — first find your rainbow, of course. Or rather, first find your trousers before you risk leaving your room. If you pass the landlord who wants his rent, and the muggers who want what's left, you may reach the pub to choose from three beers on offer, only one of which is worth having, which sounds like some pubs I know.

Choosing correctly isn't difficult, as a sign on the wall tells you which to have, and the magical shamrock and general pseudo-Irish shenanigans of this didn't appeal to me, with the adventure itself even more limited than the others.

Of the two old titles, Black Sanctum pitches you into a haunted abandoned monastery, where you need to perform something akin to a Black Mass in order to rescue . . . yes, a maiden in distress. All four adventures seem to assume the player will be male, in fact, which won't go down well with the many female adventurers there are.

Calixto Island is perhaps the most difficult, and has the best graphics. In the early stages you're hoping to find Professor Lagarto's laboratory, and from there get yourself transported to the jungles and on to the Mayan pyramid, wherein snakes and treasures lurk.

All four are quite fun to play, while they last, but the problem is that they don't last very long. I finished Black Sanctum and Sea Quest unaided in about four hours each, while the other two I whizzed through courtesy of the reviewer's help sheets provided. Graphically impressive, and you might care to sample one as a taster, but Scott Adams they ain't. **MG**

Commanding

Peripheral *Micro Command* **Micro** *Spectrum 48K* **Price** *£49.95* **Supplier** *Orion Data Ltd, 3 Cavendish St, Brighton, East Sussex.*

AS BEFITS a magazine called Micro Adventurer, getting this product set up and working properly was an adventure in itself. Was it my fault that the mistakes attributed to the Micro Command cartridge were in fact due to my ageing Spectrum deciding that it wanted to meet the great chip maker in the sky?

With a working Spectrum Micro Command worked a treat. This unique product comes in the form of a cartridge, which you connect up to the back of the Spectrum via its edge connector. Into this cartridge you have to insert a supplied microphone, and with the aid of a few simple commands your Spectrum is then able to respond to voice as well as keyboard input.

A demonstration cassette comes with the package, and the first program on this tape is designed to get the machine used to the sound of your voice. When prompted, you have to say the words Up, Down, Left, Right and Stop into the microphone, and the accompanying program then decides how well it can understand you.

When you've convinced the machine of your ability to speak English (and it responded quite happily to Kentish, Lancastrian and Devonian accents) you can then proceed to play a simple game using the afore-mentioned five words.

This is a version of Sheepwalk, where you have to guide a sheepdog around a field and make him herd a number of sheep into a pen. The kindest thing that can be said about this program is that Micro Command deserves to sell well in spite of it.

Ignoring the game however, the power of this package comes from being able to teach it to accept a number of your own words. Up to 15 words (or for that matter sounds) can be programmed into the cartridge, and with the aid of a few more programs on the supplied cassette you can get the unit to respond with a number for each word you said into it. Thus if word one happened to be FIRE, whenever you said that word into the microphone the unit would set the appropriate variable to equal 1.

You can picture the confusion. A fast, all-action arcade game has you merrily shouting 'FIRE! FIRE!' into the microphone, the neighbours hear your apparent pleas for help, and the next thing you know is that the local fire brigade are happily drenching you and your house with gallons of water.

It would make a useful addition to any adventure game, although you would have to put up with a rather limited vocabulary. Thus in the Hobbit, say, one could literally talk to Elrond and get free lunches out of him all day.

An interesting product then, with a wide range of possible applications. It remains to be seen how many software companies (or individuals) realise the possibilities which Orion Data has presented them. **PG**



Goldstar really glitters

Adventure *The Greedy Dwarf* **Micro** *BBC B* **Price** *£9.95* **Format** *Cassette* **Supplier** *Dorling Kindersley Software, 1-2 Henrietta St, London.*

GOLDSTAR Entertainment Software is a division of Dorling Kindersley and this is one of its first batch of releases across a range of popular computers. Every effort seems to have been made to ensure a feeling of value for money. The cassette comes in a large video style plastic box, which also contains an instruction booklet, a card giving loading instructions and a guarantee card. Also available is a range of maps and hint sheets.

The adventure is set under the castle of the Northern Realm of King Ardanga (the indomitable, Lord of the Fiery Kingdoms, Master of the Ultimate Limits of the Universe). Three of the King's favourite jewels have been lifted by Arfa, the dwarf of the title. To gain the gold and glory promised by the King, you must find all three jewels and kill Arfa, bringing the gems and the dwarf's head back to Ardanga.

The game starts with you at the top of a spiral staircase, about to embark on your quest. The only way to go is down, as the other exit leads back to the King, who will despatch you on the spot at this point. On first discovering a room, a full description is given. If you return to a room already visited, the long description is replaced by a short one. This does not include a mention of exits from the room, presumably because you should be making a map (the manual stresses this).

One point about the program is mentioned several times, this being the very flexible command mechanism, which means you can give simple sentences (PICK UP THE LONG SWORD PLEASE) which will be understood. Most people, including, myself, generally end up saying GET SWORD, but the program's vocabulary also includes adverbs such as CAREFULLY or QUIETLY, and in parts of the game these come into use.

Some useful words have been put into the function keys, and oddly, the cursor keys generate the four main directions, which I find very irritating (and easy to forget).

The style of this adventure is very much like that of Colossal and Sphinx, where puzzles and obstacles come thick and fast.

The puzzles in The Greedy Dwarf start out hard and get harder. Perhaps the opening game could have been more inviting, but there is the addictive quality which makes me, at least, want to go on until I find all three gems. I hope this game does as well as it deserves to. **MW**

Treat for Chip Shop fans

***John de Rivaz** outlines a system that enables speedy adventure writing*

THIS SYSTEM will enable adventure programs to be produced very quickly on any BASICODE2 computer. They may not be as fast as machine code adventures, nor may they be able to make pretty pictures; however they can run on most popular computers, creating an enormous audience for these programs.

If you do not have a BASICODE kit for your computer, then you can usually get one from your local broadcaster (the BBC in the United Kingdom) for around £3.99.

The system is more flexible and quicker to use than The Quill. This is because the program can be edited visually, not a line at a time, and basic subroutines can be added, for example if a simple arcade type action sequence is required. This is impossible with The Quill.

The kernel of the program is the data statements starting from line 25000. The data is not read in a FOR NEXT loop, therefore there can be any number of entries. Each section is ended by a "/". At the start and end of the strings there are letters that control the program.

Locations

At the start of the location text is the location character. This is the character that defines the location. This somewhat limits the number of locations, but a well written adventure needn't have thousands of locations. After the description, there is a space followed by a - if the location is light, or a * if it requires a source of light.

Next are the characters N S E W U D, for North South . . . Down. If followed by a blank, one cannot go in this direction. If followed by a letter, one can go to that location. It is therefore essential to make a plan of your proposed adventure before filling in this table. (Yes. I know that is the kind of boring thing a computer should be able to help with, but at the moment there is no software to do it.)

The Object Data follows a similar pattern. The first character, which is printed this time, is followed by text and further

Figure 1

Start address	20020	
Input variables	LO$	A single letter denoting location
Output variables	A$	Full location text
Variables used	ER$	"ERROR-"
	TH	No of things
Arrays used	TH$(TH)	Things array
Internal variables	F1 N	
Function	Prints location and holds the text in A$. Also printed is things worn or carried, and the contents of things filled.	

Figure 2

Start address	20410	
Input variables	C$	Single byte — identification of object
	LO$	A single letter denoting location
Output variables	N	Number in array of thing
Variables used	TH	No of things
Arrays used	TH$(TH)	Things array
Function	Given letter of thing required, and LO$, it returns with C$ a null string if object not there, worn or carried.	

Figure 3

Start address	20310	
Input variables	IN$	BASICODE-2 single byte input
	LO$	A single letter denoting location
Internal variable	C$	
Output variables	N	Number in array of thing
Variables used	TH	No of things
Arrays used	TH$(TH)	Things array
Function	Requests letter of thing required and returns to main loop and prints "It is not here" or returns with N being the thing no.	

Figure 4

Start address	3220	
Input variables	IN$	BASICODE 2 input byte
Output variables	none	
Variables used	none	
Arrays used	none	
Internal variables	A$ F2 N	
Function	Returns with "I see nothing unusual" or a description of the thing being looked at.	

Figure 5

Start address	3210	
Input variables	IN$	BASICODE-2 single byte input
	LO$	A single letter denoting location
	B$	^ for take or ~ for wear
Output variables	N	Number in array of thing
Variables used	TH	No of things
Internal variables	D	
Arrays used	TH$(TH)	Things array
Function	Takes or wears, returns message if thing not there or cannot be worn.	

Figure 6

Start address	3310	
Input variables	IN$	BASICODE-2 single byte input
	LO$	A single letter denoting location
	B$	^ for take or ~ for wear
Output variables	N	Number in array of thing
Variables used	TH	No of things
Internal variables	D	
Arrays used	TH$(TH)	Things array
Function	Leaves or removes, returns message if thing not there or cannot be worn.	

Figure 7

Start address	3510	
Input variables	IN$	BASICODE-2 single byte input
	LO$	A single letter denoting location
Variable used	C$	
Internal variables	D	delay loop
	I$	string store
Output variables	N	Number in array of thing
Variables used	TH	No of things
Arrays used	TH$(TH)	Things array
Function	Removes objects burned, killed or destroyed, or sends message if this is not sensible or possible.	

Figure 8

Start address	3710	for fill
Input variables		obtained by calls
Internal variables	C$	
	LO$	
	N	
	D	
Variables used	TH	No of things
Arrays used	TH$(TH)	Things array
Function	Fills a requested object with second requested object, or send message if this is not sensible or possible.	

Figure 9

Start address	3900	for empty
Input variables		obtained by calls
Internal variables	C$	
	LO$	
	N	
	D	
Variables used	TH	No of things
Arrays used	TH$(TH)	Things array
Function	Empties a requested object and sends message if this is not sensible or possible.	

Figure 10

Start address	4020	
Input variables		obtained by calls
Internal variables	C$	
	LO$	
	N	
	D	
	J	
	J1	
	J2	
	J3	
Variables used	TH	No of things
Arrays used	TH$(TH)	Things array
Function	Makes a requested object from a list. Prints message if this is not possible, or if required objects not present.	

Figure 11

Start address	4320	
Input variables		obtained by calls
Internal variables	B$	
	C$	
	LO$	
	N	
	D	
Arrays used	TH$(TH)	Things array
Function	Sets locations to that specified by the object entered or returns with message if this is not possible or sensible.	

```
1000 Let A=2000: Goto 20
1010 Rem LOAD UP ARRAY
1020 Restore 26000:N=1:ER$="ERROR - ":LO$="A":FF=0
1030 Read A$:If A$="/"Then1050
1040 N=N+1:Goto1030
1050 TH=N-1:Dim TH$(TH):Restore 26000
1060 ForJ=1ToTH:Read TH$(J): Next J
1070 Gosub 100
1072 Print "THE CHRONONAUTS":Print
1074 Print "This series of adventures features the"
1076 Print "the concept of immortalism, where people"
1078 Print "strive to reach a future age where"
1080 Print "where death is abolished."
1082 Print:Print"Any key to continue":Gosub 210:Gosub 100
1084 Print "Episode B1 - Morphostasis":Print
1086 Print "I am a Victorian scientist looking for"
1088 Print "a way to survive. Can you help?":Print
1090 Print "(Hold keys down until somthing happens)"
1092 Print:Print"Any key to continue":Gosub 210
1992 Rem
2000 Rem MAIN LOOP
2010 Rem MOVE AROUND
2012 Rem
2020 Gosub100
2030 Gosub20020:AA$=A$:If FS=1Then 2100
```

Continued on page 28

characters. The last of these defines the start location. If the object is not located, the last character must be a space. Use "*" if it starts off being carried, and "~" if it starts off being worn.

The following single characters, which are "-" if not present, define whether the thing can be the subject of the following activities: being used for filling, filled, burned, killed, destroyed or worn (ufbkdW). If the worn character is a - the object can'be be worn or climbed into (entered). If it is a letter other than W, then this is the location letter of the location that is reached if the object is entered. If it is * then this object cannot be taken and carried. It may be necessary to fill another object with this one if it is to be moved. At the current development of the program, objects have to be emptied out before the contents can be manipulated ie if the red bottle contains chloroform and you want to use chloroform to make something, then the red bottle must first be emptied.

Ingredients

Preceding these is a group of five, which are "*" if not used. These are ingredients if the object can be made up from other objects. Preceding this is another space that is either "-" or "i". It is "i" if the object is not used up when it is used to make things. For example, if you use sand to make concrete, you may have some left on the heap.

The messages for "Looks" are printed upon the command L for "Look" (surprisingly). They are followed by the object to be described. If more than one line is used, then simply have more than one data line preceded by the same letter. The subroutines start at line 20000. They are called from the main loop, which itself is quite short, but it branches into a number of command loops and calls a large subroutine which controls the computer's moves. The most important of these is the subroutine that prints out the current location and conditions (Fig 1).

It is often required to see if an object is at a particular location, and find its position in the object array. This is the function of the routine starting at 20410 (Fig 2).

An important variation on this is to get a key press and then see if the object is present. If it is not, return is to the main loop, or a return to the calling routine is effected (Fig 3).

The main loop starts at 2020, with a printing of the location and a menu of commands. Each command is entered by a single key press. It is not considered a valid pastime to get the user of an adventure game to guess at what words are in the menu, or to get him to bash away at his keyboard typing in long words like examine when pressing L would do just as well. The main loop controls the direction commands, and other commands are controlled by jumps to routines starting at 3220. The first routine is Look, and it is at 3220 (Fig 4).

Take and Wear are grouped in the next routine (Fig 5) — while Leave and Remove follow (Fig 6).

Burn, Kill and Destroy are the next routines. These only work on objects that ▷

◁ can be so treated, to be set up as previously described under object data. If an unsuitable object is chosen, then a message is printed and control passed back to the main loop. If not, then the object is taken out of circulation by having its right most character changed to a space (Fig 7).

Line 3610 is used to check that a means of burning is present. If object J is matches, the routine can be used without modification. If another object is used, object Z for example, then replace the J with Z.

Fill and empty are quite complicated, as they have to check up on two objects and check that a silly combination is not used, the object to be filled is not full, or the eg the object to be filled is not full (Figs 8 and 9).

Making things is an important part of these adventures. The puzzle is usually how to find the bits to make various objects. Also, one can make a hole in a wall and then go through it, which can be difficult if you first have to find something with which to make the hole (Fig 10).

The routine does say what things can be made, but just to make it a little more difficult some of the things listed will be destroyed objects that cannot be made. For example, in the specimen program if you kill the bantam it appears on the list of things to make.

Climbing into an object, mentioned above, is very useful if you want to block off part of the locations until preliminary tasks are completed. For example a hole in the wall can be made if the wall and a pick axe are present. The wall is destroyed, and the pick axe left. The wall has an "-" in the object data, where the pick axe has an "i" (Fig 11).

Specialising

The advantage of a BASIC adventure game over a machine code one written with a system like The Quill is that you can easily add specialist routines such as drill a hole in the example program. This sets a flag HC or HD if objects C or D have a hole drilled in them. Actually it wasn't used in the final version of the game, but was left in as a red herring.

What happens now as a result of the player's manipulation of the environment within the computer, and (usually) various computer moves? In the case of the adventure Morphostasis the game is finished if a flag is set when the friend is found, and the morphostatic coffin is made. If the player goes into the garden without a coat he stands a greater chance of dying, and also his chances of dying increase after 90 moves.

There is a counter NM in line 2100 which records the number of moves. This flag is used by the routine at 15130 to set the probability of dying. Also, there is a routine at 15220 that detects if the player is outside with no coat. In order to save run-time, the actual number of the coat in the array is used (nine). The flag is set if the player passes through the first outside location without the coat, and reset when the player comes inside.

The torch may also get blown out. This

```
2040 Print"Press N S E W U D to move"
2042 Print"L - look: ";
2044 Print"T - take: ";
2046 Print"w - wear"
2048 Print"l - leave an item: ";
2050 Print"r - remove clothing"
2052 Print"b - burn: ";
2054 Print"k - kill: ";
2056 Print"d - destroy"
2058 Print"s - suppress, ";
2059 Print"R - re-instate instructions"
2061 Print"f - fill: ";
2062 Print"e - empty: ";
2064 Print"m - make: ";
2066 Print"c - climb"
2090 Rem Specialist commands
2092 Print"H - drill a hole"
2100 B$="":Gosub 210:NM=NM+1:Gosub 15000
2130 If IN$="L"Then3020
2132 If IN$="T"ThenB$="^":Goto3210
2134 If IN$="w"ThenB$="~":Goto3210
2136 If IN$="l"Then B$="^":Goto 3310
2138 If IN$="r"Then B$="~":Goto 3310
2140 If IN$="b"Or IN$="k"Or IN$="d"Then3510
2142 If IN$="s"Then FS=1: Goto 2020
2144 If IN$="R"Then FS=0: Goto 2020
2146 If IN$="f" Then 3710
2148 If IN$="e" Then 3910
2150 If IN$="m"Then 4040
2160 If IN$="c" Then 4320
2220 Rem Specialist commands
2222 If IN$="H"Then 10020
2226 Rem
2228 Rem THE MOVEMENT SECTION
2229 Rem
2230 A$=AA$:For N=1To6
2240 IfMid$(A$,Len(A$)-13+N*2,1)<>IN$Then2260
2242 IfMid$(A$,Len(A$)-12+N*2,1)=" "Then2262
2250 LO$=Mid$(A$,Len(A$)-12+N*2,1):Goto2020
2260 Next N
2262 Print"I can't go there":Goto2100
2990 Rem
3000 Rem Action routine section
3002 Rem
3010 Rem *** LOOK ***
3012 Rem
3020 Restore 27000
3040 Gosub 20310
3080 F2=0
3090 Read A$
3100 IfA$<>"/"Then3120
3110 If F2=0ThenPrint"I see nothing unusual.":Goto2100
3112 Print: Print "Press any key to continue":Gosub 210
3118 Goto2010
3120 IfLeft$(A$,1)<>IN$Then3090
3130 If F2=0Then Gosub 100: F2=1
3140 PrintRight$(A$,Len(A$)-2):Goto 3090
3190 Rem
3200 Rem *** TAKE AND WEAR ***
3202 Rem
3210 Gosub 20310
3220 If B$="~"And Mid$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-1,1)<>"W"Then 3280
3222 IfMid$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-1,1)="W"Then 3240
3224 IfMid$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-1,1)="-"Then 3240
3226 Print "That is impossible!":Goto2100
3240 TH$(N)=Left$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-1)+B$
3250 Gosub 100:If B$="^"ThenPrint "I have taken it"
3260 If B$="~"Then Print "I am putting it on."
3270 For D=1 To 500 : Next D: Goto 2020
3280 Print "I can't wear THAT!":Goto 2100
3290 Print "I can't take THAT!":Goto 2100
3298 Rem
3300 Rem *** LEAVE AND REMOVE CLOTHING ***
3301 Rem
3310 Gosub 20310
3312 If B$="^"AndRight$(TH$(N),1)<>"^"Then 3390
3314 If B$="~"AndRight$(TH$(N),1)<>"~"Then 3380
3320 If B$="~"And Mid$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-1,1)<>"W"Then 3382
```

occurs at 15050. The routine changes the lit torch to the unlit torch. A flag is set at 15180 if the player meets the friends and also looks at him. Finally, a routine 19030 detects whether the friend has been met and looked at and the morphostatic coffin made.

If you would like to use the system for your ideas you should first make a plan on paper of your environment. Place interconnecting lines between the boxes showing the directions between them. Then show at each location the objects to be found there. Then make a list of the objects to be made. There should be one object that when made provides the solution to the main program or can be used to find the final location. For example, you could make a space ship that is entered and then flown (a special instruction) to the final location, and the computer's move section merely detects that you get to that location. The components of this special object could be made from other objects.

Grim

The Chrononauts is a series of adventures based on the idea of individuals' struggles to find the secret of immortality, or to prevent themselves falling victim to The Grim Reaper. There are several Chrononauts adventures, with graphics, written for the Spectrum with The Quill and distributed by Micronet 800, and these adventures are also available on the Porthtowan Combo Tape for the Spectrum which costs £4. Morphostasis is the first Chrononauts adventure written in BASICODE2. Although the copyright of each Chrononauts adventure remains with the writer, others users are encouraged to add to the series without legal formality or costs.

The BASICODE2 adventure writing system has interesting possibilities for mass audience text adventures. It does not have all the features and the run-time advantages of machine code systems like The Quill but has the advantage of greater flexibility and the possibility of adding special functions, even arcade action sequences.

Adventures written with my BASICODE2 system can be typed into computers without using a BASICODE2 kit, if readers are willing to write some simple subroutines to suit their machines. These are as follows:

100: Clear screen and sets cursor at 0,0 (top left hand corner).

200: Checks for keypress. If so, puts character in IN$. If no character found, then IN$ is an empty string.

210: Calls 200 repeatedly until a character is found.

260: Gives a random number in variable RV between 0 and 1.

Some computers require string space to be cleared, and this action should be performed before the main program is run. Line 1000 of a BASICODE2 program sets a variable A, which is the string space to be cleared, and then goes to line 20 which clears it and this return to line 1010.

There are more features than this in BASICODE2 but it is just these that are used in present examples of my system.

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```
3340 TH$(N)=Left$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-1)+LO$
3350 Gosub 100:If B$="^"ThenPrint "I have left it"
3360 If B$="~"Then Print "I am taking it off."
3370 For D=1 To 500 : Next D: Goto 2020
3380 If Mid$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-1,1)="W"Then 3400
3382 Print"I couldn't possibly be wearing THAT!":Goto2100
3390 Print "I am not carrying it":Goto 2100
3400 Print "I am not wearing it":Goto2100
3490 Rem
3500 Rem*** BURN KILL DESTROY ***
3502 Rem
3510 If IN$="b" Then Let I$="burn":Gosub 3610
3520 If IN$="k" Then Let I$="kill"
3530 If IN$="d" Then Let I$="destroy"
3540 Gosub 20310:ForJ=2To4
3550 If Mid$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-J,1)=Left$(I$,1)Then3580
3560 Next J
3570 Print "I cannot ";I$;" THAT!":Goto2100
3580 TH$(N)=Left$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-1)+" "
3590 Gosub 100: Print"I am now ";I$;"ing it."
3600 For D=1 To 500: Next D:Goto 2020
3610 N1=N:C$="J":Gosub 20410:Rem *** Insert matches etc ***
3620 If C$="J" Then N=N1:Return
3630 Print "I can't yet": Goto 2100
3690 Rem
3700 Rem *** FILL ***
3702 Rem
3710 Print "What am I to fill":Gosub20310:N1=N:Gosub 3770
3720 Print "With what am I to fill it?":Gosub 20310
3722 If N=N1 Then Print "Don't be silly!":Goto2100
3724 If Mid$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-6,1)<>"u"ThenN1=N:Goto3722
3730 D$=Left$(TH$(N1),Len(TH$(N1))-6)+IN$
3740 TH$(N1)=D$+Right$(TH$(N1),5)
3744 TH$(N)=Left$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-1)+" "
3750 Gosub100:Print"I am filling it up":ForD=1To500:NextD
3760 Goto 2020
3770 If Mid$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-5,1)<>"-"Then3790
3780 Print "I can't fill THAT!": Goto 2100
3790 If Mid$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-5,1)="f"ThenReturn
3800 Print "It is full": Goto 2100
3890 Rem
3900 Rem *** EMPTY ***
3902 Rem
3910 Print "What am I to empty?":Gosub20310:Gosub 3970
3920 C$=Mid$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-5,1):B$=LO$:LO$=" "
3930 D$=Left$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-6)+"f"
3940 TH$(N)=D$+Right$(TH$(N),5):Gosub20410:LO$=B$
3942 If C$=""ThenPrint"Error - contents do not exist":Stop
3944 TH$(N)=Left$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-1)+LO$
3950 Gosub100:Print"I am tipping it out":ForD=1To500:NextD
3960 Goto 2020
3970 If Mid$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-5,1)<>"-"Then3990
3980 Print "I can't empty THAT!": Goto 2100
3990 If Mid$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-5,1)<>"f"ThenReturn
4000 Print "It is already empty": Goto 2100
4010 Rem
4020 Rem  *** MAKE THINGS ***
4030 Rem
4040 F1=0:ForN=1ToTH
4050 If Right$(TH$(N),1)<>" "Then4080
4060 If F1=0Then Print "I might be able to make":F1=1
4070 Print Left$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-PO)
4080 Next N
4110 Print"Press £ if you don't want anything made."
4112 Print"Press letter preceding the object to be made."
4120 Gosub 210:If IN$="£"Then 2010
4122 C$=IN$:B$=LO$:LO$=" ":Gosub 20410:LO$=B$:J3=N
4124 Print "I'll see if I can."
4126 If C$=""Then Print "I can't.":Goto 2100
4130 J2=5:B$=Mid$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-11,J2)
4140 J1=0:ForJ=1ToJ2:Rem see if possible
4150 C$=Mid$(B$,J2-J+1,1)
4160 If C$="*"ThenJ1=J1+1:Goto 4190
4170 Gosub 20410
4180 If C$=""Then Print "I haven't all I need":Goto 2100
4190 NextJ:IfJ1=J2ThenPrint"I can't make that.":Goto2100
4200 Gosub 100:Print "I am making it."
```

Continued on page 30

```
4210 ForJ=1ToJ2:Rem delete exhaustable supplies
4220 C$=Mid$(B$,J2-J+1,1)
4230 If C$="*"Then4270
4240 Gosub 20410
4250 IfMid$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-12,1)="i"Then4270
4260 TH$(N)=Left$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-1)+" "
4270 Next J
4280 TH$(J3)=Left$(TH$(J3),Len(TH$(J3))-1)+LO$
4290 Goto 2010
4300 Rem
4305 Rem *** CLIMB INTO AN OBJECT ***
4310 Rem
4320 Print "What shall I climb into?":Gosub20310
4330 B$=Mid$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-1,1)
4340 If B$="W"Then Print "I can WEAR that":Goto2100
4350 IfB$="-"ThenPrint"I can't enter that.":Goto 2100
4352 IfB$="*"ThenPrint"I can't enter that.":Goto 2100
4360 LO$=B$:Goto 2010
9999 Rem
10000 Rem *** Specialist instruction Area ***
10001 Rem
10010 Rem Drill a hole
10020 C$="B":Gosub20410
10022 IfC$=""ThenPrint"I can't - yet.":Goto2100
10030 Print"In what?":Gosub20310
10040 IfC$<>"C"AndC$<>"E"AndC$<>"I"AndC$<>"A"Then10090
10050 Print"I have made a small hole at the bottom"
10060 If C$="C"Then HC=1
10070 If C$="E"Then HD=1
10080 Goto 2100
10090 Print"I don't think that would be sensible.":Goto2100
15000 Rem
15010 Rem *** COMPUTER'S MOVE SUBROUTINE ***
15020 Rem
15030 Rem Torch blown out
15040 Rem
15050 C$="X":Gosub 20410:If C$=""Then15130
15060 Gosub 260:If RV>.1Then15130
15068 Rem destroy lit torch, replace with unlit
15070 TH$(N)=Left$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-1)+" ":B$=LO$
15080 C$="V":LO$=" ":Gosub 20410
15090 LO$=B$:TH$(N)=Left$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-1)+LO$
15092 Gosub 100: Print "The torch has gone out'"
15094 ForD=1 To 100: Next D:Goto 2010
15100 Rem
15110 Rem Died of heart attack
15120 Rem
15130 If NM>90 Then Let HE=.3
15134 Gosub 260:If RV>HE+WFThen15150
15140 Gosub100:Print "I died of a heart attack":Goto19110
15150 Rem
15160 Rem SET FLAG IF FRIEND MET
15170 Rem
15180 If LO$="P" And IN$="L"Then FF=1
15190 Rem
15200 Rem Die of cold if coat not worn
15210 Rem
15220 If LO$<>"E"Then 15240
15230 IfRight$(TH$(9),1)<>"~"Then WF=.5
15240 If WF=.5And LO$="A"Then WF=0
19000 Rem
19010 Rem End of game
19020 Rem
19030 If FF=0Then Return
19040 Let C$="R":Gosub 20410:If C$=""Then Return
19050 Gosub100:Print"I have made a morphostatic coffin."
19060 Print"I also made other arrangements."
19070 Rem Can't say exactly what, or LIST cheating easy
19080 Print "Possibly I will be revived in the future."
19090 Print "You may follow what happens in a future"
19100 Print "CHRONONAUTS adventure game!":Print
19110 Print "Press £ for another go, or E to end."
19112 Print "You took ";NM;" moves."
19120 Gosub 210:If IN$="£"Then Run
19130 If IN$="E"Or IN$="e"Then End
19140 Goto 19120
19990 Rem
20000 Rem ***DESCRIBE CURRENT LOCATION***
20002 Rem
20010 Rem LO$=location
20020 Restore 25000
20030 Read A$:If Left$(A$,1)=LO$ Then20060
20040 If Left$(A$,1)="/"Then Print ER$;"LOCATION":Stop
20050 Goto20030
20060 If Mid$(A$,Len(A$)-12,1)="-"Then20068
20062 Rem *** Insert in C$ the object to make LIGHT ***
20064 C$="X":Gosub 20410:IfC$<>""Then20068
20066 Print "I can see NOTHING!":Return
20068 Print Mid$(A$,2,(Len(A$)-14))
20070 Print "I can see exits "
20080 For N=1 To 6
20090 If Mid$(A$,Len(A$)-12+N*2,1)=" "Then 20120
20100 Print Mid$(A$,Len(A$)-13+N*2,1);" ";
20110 Print Mid$(A$,Len(A$)-12+N*2,1)
20120 Next N
20130 F1=0:For N=1 To TH
20140 If Right$(TH$(N),1)<>LO$ Then 20172
20150 PO=13:If F1=0ThenF1=1:Print"I can also see"
20160 Print Left$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-PO)
20162 E$=Mid$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-5,1)
20164 If E$="f"Or E$="-"Then20172
20166 Print "It is filled with ";:ForJ=1ToTH
20168 If Left$(TH$(J),1)<>E$Then Next J:Goto20172
20170 Print Mid$(TH$(J),3,Len(TH$(J))-PO-2)
20172 Next N
20180 F1=0:ForN=1ToTH
20190 If Right$(TH$(N),1)<>"^"Then20220
20200 If F1=0Then Print "I have with me":F1=1
20210 Print Left$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-PO)
20220 Next N
20240 F1=0:ForN=1ToTH

20250 If Right$(TH$(N),1)<>"~"Then20280
20260 If F1=0Then Print "I am wearing":F1=1
20270 Print Left$(TH$(N),Len(TH$(N))-PO)
20280 Next N:Return
20290 Rem
20300 Rem *** IS OBJECT AT CURRENT LOCATION? ***
20302 Rem
20310 Print"Press letter preceding the object":Gosub210
20320 C$=IN$:Gosub20410:If C$<>""Then Return
20340 Print "It is not here.":Goto 2100
20392 Return
20400 Rem *** Is another object here? ***
20410 For N=1 To TH
20420 IfRight$(TH$(N),1)="^"OrRight$(TH$(N),1)="~"Then 20440
20430 If Right$(TH$(N),1)<>LO$ Then20450
20440 If Left$(TH$(N),1)=C$ Then Return
20450 Next N:C$="":Return
24990 Rem
25000 Rem LOCATION DATA
25001 Rem
25002 Rem a "-" if light or "*" if dark, and directions.
25010 Data "A The main hall of my laboratory -NCSEEDWBU DF"
25020 Data "B The library. -N SEAW U D "
25030 Data "C The workshop. -N SAEHW U D "
25040 Data "D The pharmacy. -N S E WAU D "
25050 Data "E The garden. -NASJE W U D "
25060 Data "F The cellar. *N S E W UAD "
25070 Data "G A dried well. *N S E W UID "
25080 Data "H A Store. *N S E WCU D "
25090 Data "I A tunnel. *N S E W UFDG"
25100 Data "J The garden lawn. -NESKEKWKU D "
25110 Data "K A path through flowers. -NJSLEJWJU D "
25120 Data "L A shrubbery. -NKSNELWLU D "
25130 Data "M A shed. -NNS E W U D "
25140 Data "N A rose garden. -NLSMEOW U D "
25150 Data "O A front garden. -N S EPWNU D "
25160 Data "P A house. -N S E WOU D "
25990 Data "/"
25998 Rem
26000 Rem OBJECT DATA. Object letter, description,start loc.
26001 Rem penultimate W indicates it can be worn
26002 Rem A b before this indicates it can be burned
26003 Rem A k before this, killed, and a d destroyed.
26004 Rem An f before this means it can be filled
26005 Rem any other letter means it can be emptied,
26006 Rem and the letter is the contents. u=used for fill
26007 Rem The next five are the ingredients required
26008 Rem to make this item. If<5, fill in with *
26009 Rem If they are all *, then it can't be made.
26010 Rem The next letter is an i if the object is not
26011 Rem used up when making something.
26012 Rem If instead of a W the penultimate letter is a
26013 Rem letter, it means the object can be entered, and
26014 Rem the location of its interior is the letter. If
26015 Rem the letter is an "*" it simply means the object
26016 Rem cannot be taken. It can only be taken if the
26017 Rem if a W or a -. The location * cannot be used for
26018 Rem for the inside of an object.
26026 Data "A) A book. -*****u-bdk-B"
26028 Data "B) A hand drill with
```

```
 bit. -#####u--d--C"
26030 Data "C) A very large wooden crate. -#####ufb-d-N"
26040 Data "D) A pile of sand. i#####u---d#N"
26050 Data "E) A metal drum, 6ft by 3ft dia. -#####uf--d-M"
26060 Data "F) Formaldehyde. i#####u-b-d#D"
26070 Data "G) Chloroform. -#####u-b-d#D"
26080 Data "H) Cement powder. i#####u-b-d-E"
26090 Data "I) A coat. -#####u-b-dWA"
26100 Data "J) A box of matches. i#####u-b-d-A"
26110 Data "K) An experimental bantam. -#####u-bkd-A"
26120 Data "L) Gas cylinders. i#####u---d-H"
26130 Data "M) A length of rubber tubing. i#####u-b-d-H"
26140 Data "N) Gas torches. i#####u---d-H"
26150 Data "O) A welding set. iLMN##u-b-d- "
26160 Data "P) A steel sheet. -#####u---d-G"
26170 Data "Q) A lid for the drum. -PO###u---d- "
26180 Data "R) A morphostatic coffin -OEFCDu---d- "
26190 Data "S) A wall -#####-----#F"
26200 Data "T) A hole in the wall -SU###------I "
26210 Data "U) A pickaxe. i#####u---d-M"
26220 Data "V) A dry wooden torch. -X####u---d-A"
26230 Data "W) Tar oil. i#####u--bd#M"
26240 Data "X) A flaming torch. -VWJ##u---d- "
26250 Data "Y) A red bottle -#####uf--d-D"
26260 Data "a) A blue bottle -#####uf--d-D"
26270 Data "b) A person. -#####--bkd-P"
26280 Data "c) A coded message. -#####u-b-d-G"
26990 Data "/"
26998 Rem
27000 Rem MESSAGES FOR LOOKS

27002 Rem
27010 Data "A It says that bodies can be preserved"
27020 Data "A if they are submerged in formaldehyde."
27050 Data "c It says This message can be converted##"
27060 Data "c by a code to be given in a future####"
27070 Data "c chrononauts to reveal more' - rfgde"
27080 Data "b This person is a friend of mine. I ask"
27090 Data "b that I may be placed in the morphostatic"
27100 Data "b coffin when I die, and that it be buried"
27110 Data "b in the well."
27120 Data "E The drum is so +----------+"
27130 Data "E solidly made   : :  :  : :"
27140 Data "E that it must   : :  :  : :"
27150 Data "E last for       : :  :  : :"
27160 Data "E centuries!     +----------+"
27170 Data "C          ...."
27180 Data "C        ........"
27190 Data "C      .... ... ."
27200 Data "C    .............."
27230 Data "U           :"
27240 Data "U            :"
27250 Data "U       --------"
27260 Data "U            :"
27270 Data "U           :"
27280 Data "S--------------------"
27290 Data "S :   :   :   :   :"
27300 Data "S--------------------"
27310 Data "S   :   :   :   :   :"
27320 Data "S--------------------"
27330 Data "S :   :   :   :   :"
27340 Data "S--------------------"
27350 Data "S   :   :   :   :   :"
27360 Data "T--------------------"
27370 Data "T :   :         :   :"
27380 Data "T-------       --------"
27390 Data "T   :           :   :"
27400 Data "T------        -------"
27410 Data "T :   :             :"
27420 Data "T---------      --------"
27430 Data "T   :   :   :   :   :"
27990 Data "/"
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Booking-up so

John Fraser evaluates the book and software packages currently available

"YOU'VE READ the book, now play the game" seems to becoming an increasingly popular slogan in advertisements for adventure games. Since the spectacular success of The Hobbit several other companies have moved into producing bookware, books combined with software cassettes in one package.

Sometimes, however, the games bear little resemblance to the books on which they are supposed to be based and the attractive packaging can be quite misleading. Indeed, the diversity of approaches, not only to the games but even to the books, makes choosing a suitable package all rather confusing for the new enthusiast.

Almost all the currently available bookware falls into the general categories of science fiction or fantasy, which raises several interesting questions. For example how suitable are these genres for translating into micro adventures? How closely do the games follow the books? What are the advantages and disadvantages of these to mediums? Are such packages all that they claim to be?

First of all there are several obvious but nevertheless fundamental differences between books and software which concern their physical formats alone. For one thing a book is portable. You can read a book anywhere, whereas you cannot — at least not yet — take your micro on a train journey and play adventure games, except with printed versions such as *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain* and subsequent titles.

Escape

Nor do you have to wait before you can read a book. A long adventure like The Hobbit takes several minutes to load and even then you may experience loading difficulties or find that the game does not always do what it should. My copy of The Hobbit for example, crashes when I try to escape through the trap door in the Elvenking's cellar and this has been known to happen with other copies.

It is easy, too, to keep your place in a book. If you wish to return to a particular page you can do so almost instantaneously. Although you can save your current game position in many adventures, the process is time consuming and much less convenient. Nevertheless, it is a useful option if you have just spent several hours exploring the farthest reaches of Middle Earth and dread the thought of having to start all over again the following night.

For those with printers, The Hobbit enables you to obtain print-outs of the adventure windows so that you can examine your progress at any time. Effectively, you have your own program-generated story in which you decide the course of the action. One wonders whether fiction writers will eventually be churning out best selling novels with special novel-writing programs?

With the memory limitations of home micros full length novels or, for that matter, text adventures of a similar size, are out of the question, although Gilsoft's new adventure-writing program The Quill, now means that anyone can write their own adventures without any previous experience of programming.

From what has just been said it might appear that adventure games are too much of a hassle to be worth playing. As I hope to show, however, this is certainly not the case since the different formats that the games can take are extremely varied.

The book may be a straightforward novel or story such as Colin Kapp's The Pen and the Dark or may be arranged, as in The Warlock of Firetop Mountain, in the manner of a programmed learning course whereby the reader selects different options at each stage of the narrative and so becomes an active participant in the adventure.

On the other hand, the games may be pure text adventures which follow the story closely (The Pen and the Dark); text and graphic adventures (The Hobbit); arcade maze games which bear little resemblance to the book (Warlock); or adventures offering selected incidents from the story with strategy or arcade type games (Korth Trilogy).

The imaginary worlds of science fiction and fantasy are natural choices for software writers. One of the advantages of producing a game based on a previously published novel or story is that you have a ready-made scenario and here there is no shortage. *The Hobbit* was an early classic which has inspired fantasy writers ever since. Originally published in 1937, the book appeared well before the first mainframe computer became operational, but if ever there was a ready-made scenario this was it.

Heroes

The plot is virtually a blueprint for fantasy adventures: a journey across a vast and often inhospitable land in search of precious gold. Along the way Bilbo, a hobbit, in the company of dwarfs meets all sorts of creatures — goblins, elves, trolls and ultimately the evil dragon, Smaug.

Warlock concerns a similar quest, although in this case you take on the role of the hero and have to locate the Warlock's treasure, hidden deep within the dungeons of Firetop mountain.

The Pen and the Dark and the Korth Trilogy represent two ends of the science fiction spectrum. The Pen and the Dark is the only one to be based on a strictly scientific premise and is one of five stories by Colin Kapp, about the various anomalies investigated by Fritz Van Noon of the Unorthodox Engineers. In this story he attempts to solve the mystery of the Dark, a vast mushroom-shaped artefact left by an alien intelligence. The Dark appears to be indestructible, absorbing all the energy that the Unorthodox Engineers can unleash. Surrounding the Dark itself is the Pen, the region which negates all energy.

The Korth Trilogy tells of how three young heroes eventually save the earth from repeated attacks by the mighty Korth empire. This is sheer space opera, cowboys and Indians among the stars following in the wake of *Star Wars* and the kind of



Software games

simple scenario one finds in so many arcade games.

Even though all these books are quite different from each other they nevertheless have one common feature. They describe imaginary worlds that are subject to the same laws that govern our own or else possess an internal consistency which the reader can believe in. Even in Middle Earth, where magic rings and fire-breathing dragons are taken for granted, logical limitations are imposed. Bilbo has very human weaknesses and emotions, and is the sort of reluctant hero the readers can readily identify with.

There are several factors which ought to be considered whether you are setting out to convert your favourite book into a mammoth adventure or merely trying to decide which package to spend your money on first. Clearly, if you happen to be familiar with any of the books you are on surer ground. Although these considerations inevitably overlap to some degree, they fall roughly into three main areas which I shall look at in turn.

Attack

Believability: is the fictional world so credible that the reader becomes thoroughly immersed in the events, characters and places in the book? *The Hobbit* is one of those rare books that people read again and again, and yet the story remains the same each time. So does the game add anything to the reader's enjoyment of the book? And what about those games which only portray selected incidents from a story? If the book is not essential to playing the game is it of any value?

Interest: are some games so complex that you would rather just sit down with the book and passively absorb the story, leaving the game alone? In The Hobbit events proceed slightly differently each time you play the game. There is an element of the unexpected, with the possibility of being attacked at any moment. It is also possible to interact with the main characters so that the story becomes more your own creation.

The Pen and the Dark, in contrast, is a fixed adventure, but the problems raised in the game are sufficiently complex to sustain your interest for hours. Warlock and the Korth Trilogy are graphic adventures only and cannot really be compared to the text from which they are derived.

Ease of Play: this overlaps to some extent with the need to capture the player's interest. Without clear and complete documentation you are only going to find the game too frustrating to play. With some packages fairly comprehensive booklets are included that offer advice on such things as communicating with the other characters, crossing rivers and so on.

With others you can obtain a sheet of hints for solving most of the problems that you encounter, although without giving too much away. The graphic adventures such as Warlock and the Korth Trilogy are self-contained, with full instructions appearing on the screen.

Having now established some criteria for assessing bookware, let us take a closer look at each package in turn and see how the software writers have tackled the problem of converting a book into an adventure game. Each combination of book and software cassette illustrates different features which I shall focus on.

The obvious example to begin with is The Hobbit, since the game has been a bestseller for some time and is often regarded as the adventure by which all others should be judged. It also contains several innovations which are either difficult or quite impossible to reproduce in book form.

It is not difficult to see why The Hobbit has been so highly praised, even though more recent examples, such as Valhalla, have extended the possibilities of adventures still further, so that you can now actually see the characters moving in accordance with your instructions. But The Hobbit was revolutionary because it not only combined a text adventure with high-resolution graphics, but also displayed some degree of artificial intelligence.

The player could communicate with the characters in the story using plain English, or Inglish, as the publishers have chosen to call it. Naturally there were limitations to the Inglish language but this novel feature was a considerable advance.

The ability of the characters to lead independent lives also enhanced the appeal of the game enormously. Elrond invariably gives you different directions each time you ask him to read the map. Often Thorin refuses to co-operate when you ask him to help you escape from the goblin's dungeon. And, on rare occasions, you may be captured in Beorn's house and find yourself in the Elvenking's Hall. In fact, there is no one solution to The Hobbit. As anyone who claims to have finished the game will know, you may still be making new discoveries each timer you play it.

Reproduced

The textual descriptions are concise and, unlike pure text adventures, there are no lengthy descriptive passages. You are not told what Gollum or a vicious warg looks like because all that is in the book. What you do get is a basic description of your location, such as "You are in a dark dungeon in the Elvenking's Hall. To the south west there is a red door . . ." and there is an attractive picture of the dungeon on the screen. The book fills you in on the atmosphere of the place and describes Bilbo's predicament and his reactions to it, in a way which no text and graphics could hope to do.

The real time element, however, cannot be reproduced in book form. As you ponder over your next move all the other characters are going about their business, which means you cannot spend too long hanging around. Thorin will soon tell you to hurry up or he will sit down and start singing about gold.

The game also allows you to explore various locations. You may look through doors and windows to see what lies beyond or who might be waiting for you. You can follow characters, examine objects, eat and drink. In fact live out a surprisingly real existence.

There are some slight departures from the book, though the sequence of events▷

You are in a well-lit room, an emporium of some sort. Is this the place of which the old man spoke? For there, on the shelf in front of you, is the object of your quest, the fabled tome wherein the greatest products of the imagination can be found. You have the magic one pound note in your hand. You know what you must do.

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◁ are much the same. One significant difference is that Bilbo has lost 13 dwarfs and only has the chief dwarf, Thorin, and the wizard, Gandalf, to accompany him. Another is that the answer to Gollum's riddle is not the same as it is in the book. Then again, you may find objects which do not appear in the book at all, such as the golden key in the Misty Valley.

Options

The success of the game has a good deal to do with how much it involves the player in the action. But it is equally due to Tolkien's own fertile imagination which created the evocative land of Middle Earth and its host of characters in such convincing detail. Tolkien's world has long had a steady stream of visitors and now newcomers, or already hardened travellers, have the opportunity to become in a sense part of that creation.

With The Warlock of Firetop Mountain we are on somewhat different ground, although the invented worlds of Middle Earth and the Warlock's lair have a good deal in common. It was first published in 1982 and since then more than one million copies have been sold. The book offers a comparatively cheap means of adventure gaming, which has more in common with dungeons and dragons type role-playing games: your initial characteristics are determined beforehand by rolling die and recording the results on an adventure sheet.

You start with the minimum of equipment — a sword, rucksack with food and drink and a shield. You may find other objects along the way. To restore your skill, stamina or luck points you can take a magic potion at any time. Whenever you have to fight a creature there is an elaborate combat system and escape options are sometimes provided.

The book attempts to simulate a degree of randomness by continually providing different options for the player and facilities whereby he can test his luck and so on. While this is a demanding and time-consuming adventure, you do get the satisfaction of being able to deal with all sorts of nasty creatures yourself and, should you succeed, the additional enjoyment in having discovered the treasure. Unlike Bilbo's quest there is only one route to your journey's end, although it can take you several attempts before you find the correct one.

As a marked contrast the game is an arcade type through which you manoeuvre a figure through a complex maze and have to collect 15 keys to unlock the treasure chest and find the way out. All manner of creatures may attack you, but you have to react quickly for this is a very fast game. Often, there are lengthy periods when little happens at all.

The book conveys far more of the atmosphere of the place than the game does. You cannot really imagine the dark dungeons and slimy walls when zapping around the maze; nor do you have much time to think things over. The book does not fall victim to the memory limitations of many home micros and so can afford to devote far more space to description. As in an exciting novel you feel compelled to read on, only here you take on the role of the hero which adds greatly to the suspense. Will some loathsome creature be waiting for you behind the door? Will you manage to cross the fast-flowing river? Will you even survive the journey to the Warlock's treasure?

The element of suspense is lacking in the game. The emphasis falls more on fast reactions and good co-ordination. For the experience of being involved in a fully realised world of fantasy you need the book, but at least the combination offers a choice of formats for less than the price of many adventures.

The Korth Trilogy consists of three book/software packages. There are three games on each tape representing episodes from the narrative. While some of the games are of the arcade variety, others are strategic with layouts that resemble board games on which the player moves his men around usually in an attempt to infiltrate the alien base.

The inside cover of each book gives notes on the accompanying programs, together with page references to the incidents in the story. But the games can quite easily be played without having to read the books. Sufficient information is provided on the screen. It is best, though, to make notes before trying to play them because there is a good deal to remember.

In the first book, Escape from Arkaron, the heroes test-fly a newly developed ultra light ship. When tests prove successful they venture out to an inner planet of the Sirius system, where they make their first contact with the Korth empire.

The related games tape contains Testrun, an uninspiring game which shows the simulator developed after the first test run. The object is to fly either to Sirius or Pluto, avoiding the continuous stream of meteors that scroll jerkily down an oblong window in the centre of the screen. There is a similar simulation game on the second tape, which is a lunar lander type and adding little to your enjoyment of the book.

There are other games which allow the player to participate in the more exciting incidents, such as Prisoner in which your mission is to rescue one of your men from the Korth prison and have to fight your way along a maze of corridors to free him from the cell. In Alpha, on the second tape, you must find and reprogram the computer responsible for sending unmanned Korth ships towards the solar system. You can move up the floors via lifts or stairs, though you do have to watch out for unfriendly guards along the way.

One game even portrays events which supposedly occurred before the story opens. In Empire you must have to run the empire while the computer is being repaired. You must deal with uprisings, shortages, overproduction and so on. This is perhaps the most interesting game in the trilogy although, as the situation does not arise in the story, the books are of no help at all.

Contrived

For your children these packages are worthwhile. The games will doubtless encourage the child to read the books and vice versa. Sometimes, however, the pace of the story momentarily slackens. When the trio is testing the revolutionary space drive, for example, the reader is bombarded with technical data which might have been better relegated to an appendix for all the good it does in advancing the plot. It is almost as if the stories were written after the games and the incidents slotted into place around them.

Books written specifically for computer games are more likely to be contrived, because the writer has written to a predetermined formula rather than sought ▷



◁ inspiration from his imagination. In the case of the Korth Trilogy the same writer was responsible for the books and the games.

But effective characterisation, literary style makes for entertaining fiction which can so easily be discarded as the player presses on with the adventure. An exciting story, though, is what the player will want to read and, on the whole, this is just what the Korth Trilogy, with its inter-galactic battles and desperate missions and character development, provides in abundance.

Frustrating

For a more intellectually demanding adventure you may prefer The Pen and the Dark, which follows the main events in Colin Kapp's ingenious story: the engineers' investigations of the Pen and their attempts to gain entry into the Dark.

The game introduces new problems concerning how to obtain and use the equipment necessary to complete your objective.

Fortunately a hints sheet is available from the publisher, although even then, you may well find yourself in extremely frustrating situations. You can spend much of the time trying to open doors which cannot be opened until you have completed some other task, if only you knew what that other task was.

At least there is no real time element to contend with, so you can take as long as you like over a problem without feeling threatened.

The instructions recommended that you read only the first section of the story before playing the game, otherwise your enjoyment of finding out the secrets of the quest and perhaps the conclusion of the story for yourself may be considerably reduced.

Like The Hobbit the text is minimal, but often the program will respond to meaningless inputs in a rather more humorous vein. At the same time the responses can be irritating when you have tried everything you can think of and do not seem to be making any headway.

While The Pen and the Dark lacks the innovative features of The Hobbit, it certainly throws out a challenge to anyone who delights in problem-solving. It is very much a matter of personal taste which sort of game is to be preferred. And, of course, as with literary awards, no two players will agree on what they consider to be the best package.

Complement

In any case it is not a question of whether one is better than another; the games are simply different.

Which is not to say that book/software packages cannot be evaluated at all. At least we can affirm a general principle: that adventures, whether text, graphics or both, should not be a substitute for the book, but that one should complement the other. Ideally, playing the game will lead to a greater appreciation of the book, while reading the book at the appropriate stage leads to a greater understanding of the game.

Book/software packages are becoming increasingly popular with software writers and publishers. While taking plots from existing books may be less work for programmers short on original ideas, established book publishers are recognising the enormous potential that such packages can have.

Revolution

Numerous projects are reported to be under development, among them Harry Harrison's Stainless Steel Rat from Mosaic, a Tolkienesque fantasy from Century and, for the BBC micro, The War of the Worlds from CRL.

And Quicksilva's recent release based on Raymond Briggs children's book *The Snowman* is bound to be a great success. Like the Korth Trilogy this is not an adventure game, although it does involve the child in ways that are unusual.

Whether we are heading for the software revolution that some writers are forecasting remains to be seen. But certainly bookware shows all the signs of being a growth area, and the sort of combinations likely to be dreamed up over the next few months is very much open to speculation.

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When dreams come true

***Tony Bridge** compares the latest adventure-writing aid, The Dungeon Builder, with The Quill*

HALFWAY THROUGH the latest adventure from Level 9 or Scott Adams do you ever wonder: "Could I write a program like this?" or how about: "I wish I could do that." Now you can.

In the January issue of Micro Adventurer I looked at a program that has transformed the adventure world for the Spectrum at least: The Quill, from Gilsoft. It is, quite simply, an adventure-writing program which enables the user to design and code his own machine language adventure.

Menu-driven

A new program has just been released, written by Dream Software, and called The Dungeon Builder (Ye Graphic Adventure Writer). Now, I was very impressed with The Quill. Let's see how they compare.

Both programs are menu-driven. The Quill opens with an 18-point menu, and as the user progresses with designing his adventure, several sub-menus are encountered. Figure 1 shows the main display from Dream's Dungeon Builder. This is where the user finds himself after loading the program, after a short sub-menu ("the outer menu" in figure 2), which asks the usual LOAD/SAVE/CREATE questions.

Whenever the user comes to this display from another menu a cursor is situated at top left (cell X01-Y01). The display is a window on a much larger, 40 × 40 grid, and the grid scrolls across or up and down the screen as necessary. The cursor can then be placed at the edge of a cell, or in the centre, and the menu beneath the grid reflects this.

As you can see from figure 2 a different menu is available in each case. When setting up an adventure, the cursor should be placed in the centre of the starting cell (this can be any one of the 1600), and "D" (description) chosen. The text describing the room can then be typed in — if an object is to be placed in the room, this can be done using C"R"eate object, and "S"core will obviously give a score, of the designer's choosing, for the player finding the object (a score may also be given for the player just finding the room). Should your tastes run to scary monsters the object does not have to be inanimate.

More Menus (see figure 2) then allow the creator of the adventure to specify all the various parameters of the game — from commands associated with each object ("TAKE" or "GET"), to the weight of each object (500 units may be carried at any one time).

This editing procedure includes "conditional" commands, for example the player may "KILL WEREWOLF" only if he carries the jewel. The conditions surrounding each object may be as complex as desired (subject to memory constraints).

Having set the object parameters in the cell, the cursor is moved to one of the four edges, at which point another menu (the Edge Editing Menu) is dislayed. This allows for movement between the cells or rooms. At its simplest level and the menu allows a passage to be opened between any two cells, this is seen on-screen as design progresses.

But the designer can be more devious and set up "conditional" openings, which will include doors that can be locked and need to be opened in some special way, as well as 'Consequential" movement, in which the player is transported from one room to another, remote, room if he attempts to exit by a certain route.

I won't go through all the facilities available during the editing process. Suffice to say that the adventure designer can build up a complex network of locations, with any kind of interconnection (even "time tunnels" should he so wish), filled with all sorts of puzzles, objects and monsters.

The interpreter, that most important part of any adventure program that takes the player's input and decides if it is valid and how to act upon it, can be seeded with the designer's own messages.

Message composed

Thus, the usual "YOU TAKE KNIFE" may be edited to say "YOU PICK UP THE GOLDEN KNIFE, WHICH THEN COMES ALIVE IN YOUR HAND". Similarly, if the player does something to cause his death ("EAT THE WEREWOLF") then too, a special explanatory message can be composed for that particular event. In this way, an original ▷

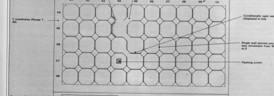


Figure 1 which shows the main screen display from Dungeon Builder



Load, Save, Verify, Modify, Create, Play game	Outer Menu
Open, Block, Cond, conseQuential, Modify, cReate object, Exit	Edge Editing Menu
Edit Score, Description, Picture Modify, cReate object Exit	Centre Editing Menu
Edit Name, Description, Score Commands, Position, Weight, Exit	Object Editing Menu
Edit Name, Condition, Actions Exit	Verb Editing Menu
Position? Any, Carried, Here Select.	Position Menu
Say, Die, Move, sTatus, Jump	Command Menu

Figure 2 shows menus that specify the game parameters

◁ and individual adventure can soon be built up.

But wait a moment. What's this option on the Centre Editing Menu? "P"icture? Dream's Dungeon Builder is "Ye Graphic Adventure Writer", remember, and this is where "P"icture takes a bow.

Masterpiece

With the cursor in the window of a cell, selecting "P" will present the designer with a sketchpad. This is blank except for a cross-hair at screen-centre, and a status line at the bottom of the screen. This contains a palette of colours, with the selected INK colour shown, and the X and Y co-ordinates of the cursor.

The drawing routine is pretty simple, allowing lines to be drawn between two points, as well as triangles between three. These triangles can be painted or filled in. More complex shapes must be built up of several triangles.

Not many facilities, then, but enough to draw simple pictures, that are quite quickly drawn. Scenes like those in The Hobbit, for example, or Dream's own adventure, The Quest for the Holy Grail, are quite possible.

A program on the B side of the tape allows an adventure written with The Dungeon Builder to be run without the main program, so that your masterpiece can be passed around your friends. If you decide to sell it, then Dream Software, like Gilsoft, only require a mention of The Dungeon Builder in your program.

How do the two systems compare? You'll notice, in figure 1 a readout, top right, showing the amount of free memory left. The Quill starts off with about 30K to play around with, while The Dungeon Builder starts with something like 10K — some difference. And graphics will eat up this pretty quickly. Another disadvantage with The Dungeon Builder is that objects have to be described with eight characters only, and any more than this number are truncated.

In my first foray into The Dungeon Builder, I described a room with "a number of spacesuits". I wanted the player to be able to pick up one of the spacesuits. How to describe one of these spacesuits in just eight letters? "Suit" isn't quite right, though would have to make do — "spacesuit" is easily accommodated by The Quill. Room descriptions, too, have to be carefully thought out in Dream's program, and have to be executed in black on white, whereas The Quill allows the designer to compose his text in any colour and any combination of FLASH and BRIGHT. Text editing is quite sophisticated, too.

The main display of The Dungeon Builder, as you can see in figure 3, is extremely useful in aiding the designer in writing his adventure, while The Quill is rather more difficult to work with. The graphic capability of The Dungeon Builder will be a great bonus to many users; graphics are not supported by The Quill, although clever programming can be pressed into service to give rudimentary displays.

The manuals, too, accentuate the different approaches of the two programs. That of The Quill is rather oblique, and difficult to understand at first, although I must admit it is thorough. Dream's 100-page manual is much easier to read, and covers everything no less than three times: once in a "press this key to see this result" fashion, followed by a more thorough discussion of each command. The manual finishes with a summary of all the commands. An added bonus is the example program, relying heavily on the original colossal Caves (Spelunker Magazine and all), to show the user how The Dungeon Builder will look.

So each of the two programs has its own character. I could live without graphics of the nature of those in The Dungeon Builder, and find the text compositon of The Quill easier. But The Dungeaon Builder is much easier to work with.

Should you prefer the Dungeon and Dragons type of game, you will find your tastes catered for in a program from Crystal Computing, called The Dungeon Master. Part of this program allows the user to build a simple dungeon and fill it with magic potions, monsters and wizards.

The game mechanics follow D & D conventions (HIT POINTS, CHARISMA and so on all making an appearance), and characters created by the player may be carried through any of the dungeons created.

Catalysts

Adventures written with the aid of an adventure-designing program all necessarily tend to be rather similar. This is no less true of Scott Adams in the US and Level 9 and Channel 8 in the UK, than of Quill'd programs, or those written with the aid of The Dungeon Master and The Dungeon Builder.

As these latter programs free the author from worry over the coding, he must ensure that his imagination and originality compensates for the family likeness. This is easier said than done, alas. Although I think that programs like the above act as catalysts in the creation of good adventures (and I look forward to seeing many of them), it would be a pity if all originality were lost. □

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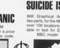
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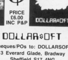
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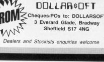




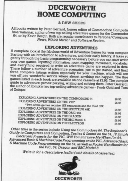












YOUR ADVENTURES

This month's Your Adventure contributions are aimed at Vic 20 and Spectrum owners. For the Spectrum Andrew Davenport contributes an input and slicing routine. The routine covers inputting first, poking character codes into memory from 63951 onwards. It will only accept upper case letters, SPACE and ENTER. The string slicing routine takes the first three letters of the first word (the verb) and the first three letters of the last word (the noun) and pokes them at 63981 to 63986 from where strings can be formed. The code for the routines is entered by typing in and running the Basic loader given in Andrew's introduction. For the Vic, we've a skeleton adventure which readers can develop to suit their own tastes. Let us know if you come up with anything really interesting.

Send us your adventure listings — modules which readers can incorporate into their own games, short adventures and useful programming routines are all welcome. Please send us a printout and cassette along with a general description of the program and details of how it is constructed and can be used. If you want us to return your program, enclose a stamped, addressed envelope. If you have any queries on the listings, write to the appropriate author, Your Adventures, Micro Adventurer, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 3LD

Skeleton for Dracula

From Jullian Marshall-James in Somerset.
DRAC'S TREASURE is the skeleton of an adventure for the Vic 20. It provides the player with an opportunity to dress it up using imagination to make the game more difficult, interesting or simple.

In the basic adventure, the player is set the task of finding the treasure belonging to Count Dracula. You must hunt through his castle being careful not to wake the sleeping count.

Some of the places you might explore in this text adventure include a crypt, a courtyard, a study and a treasury.

```
10 REM DRACS TREASURE
20 REM BY S.I.D AND   J.M.J 1/1/84
21 SW=0
22 SH=0
23 RU=0
24 CR=0
30 PRINT"YOU ARE IN A LARGE     CASTLE"
40 PRINT"YOU SEE;SWORD,SHIELD, DIRTY OLD
 RUG"
45 PRINT"POSSIBLE EXITS:WEST,  EAST
50 INPUT"WHAT NEXT?";WN$
60 IF WN$="TAKE SWORD"THEN900
70 IF WN$="TAKE SHIELD"THEN950
80 IF WN$="TAKE RUG"THEN1000
90 IF WN$="GO WEST"THEN110
100 IF WN$="GO EAST"THEN250
105 GOTO40
110 PRINT"YOU ARE IN A DARK      ATTIC"
120 PRINT"YOU SEE:A COFFIN,CROSS ON FLOO
R"
125 PRINT"POSSIBLE EXITS:EAST"
130 INPUT"WHAT NEXT?";WN$
140 IF WN$="TAKE CROSS"THEN1050
150 IF WN$="GO EAST"THEN30
160 IF WN$="OPEN COFFIN"THEN170
165 GOTO130
170 PRINT"DRACULA SLOWLY CLIMBS OUT OF T
HE OPEN COFFINHE LOOKS LIKEHE'S VERYTHIR
STY."
180 INPUT"WHAT NEXT?";WN$
190 IF WN$="GO EAST"THEN200
195 GOTO221
200 PRINT"DRACULA CREEPS UP BE- HIND YOU
,BITESYOU ON  THE NECK AND KILLS YOU"
210 PRINT"HA HA YOU LOSE.        NOW TRY
AGAIN.        TO STOP TYPE RUNSTOP/ REST
ORE
220 GOTO30
221 IF WN$="SHOW CROSS"THEN223
222 GOTO180
223 IF CR=0THEN240
224 PRINT"DRACULA FADES INTO    DUST AND
 A TRAPDOOR   OPENS WITHIN THE      COFF
IN"
225 INPUT"WHAT NEXT?";WN$
226 IF WN$="ENTER TRAPDOOR"THEN1100
227 IF WN$="GO EAST"THEN30
```

```
228 GOTO225
240 PRINT"YOU HAVEN'T GOT A      CROSS!!?
"
241 PRINT"DRACULA BITES YOU AND YOU DIE"
242 GOTO210
250 PRINT"YOU ARE IN A SMALL     STUDY"
260 PRINT"YOU SEE;A DESK,AN OPEN WINDOW,
A BOOKSHELF    FULL OF BOOKS"
265 PRINT"POSSIBLE EXITS:WEST"
270 INPUT"WHAT NEXT?";WN$
280 IF WN$="GO WINDOW"THEN282
281 GOTO284
282 PRINT"YOU HAVE JUST FALLEN  TWO STOR
IES AND BROKEN YOUR NECK"
283 GOTO210
284 IF WN$="TAKE BOOK"THEN286
285 GOTO270
286 PRINT"BOOKSHELF SPRINGS UP  AND A SE
CRET PASSAGE APPEARS"
287 INPUT"WHAT NEXT?";WN$
288 IF WN$="GO WEST"THEN30
289 IF WN$="ENTER PASSAGE"THEN300
290 GOTO287
300 PRINT"PASSAGE VERY DARK"
310 PRINT"CAN JUST SEE;LARGE     STARING
EYES"
320 PRINT"POSSIBLE EXITS:NORTH,SOUTH,EAS
T"
330 INPUT"WHAT NEXT?";WN$
340 IF WN$="GO NORTH"THEN250
350 IF WN$="GO EAST"THEN352
351 GOTO360
352 PRINT"YOU ARE IN A COMPLETE-LY EMPTY
 ROOM"
353 PRINT"POSSIBLE EXITS:WEST"
354 INPUT"WHAT NEXT?";WN$
355 IF WN$="GO WEST"THEN300
356 GOTO354
360 IF WN$="GO SOUTH"THEN400
365 IF WN$="STAB EYES"THEN370
366 GOTO330
370 IF SW=1THEN380
371 PRINT"EYES DESTROY YOU WITH MASTER R
AY"
372 GOTO210
380 PRINT"MONSTER IS DESTROYED"
381 INPUT"WHAT NEXT?";WN$
382 IF WN$="GO NORTH"THEN250
383 IF WN$="GO EAST"THEN352
384 IF WN$="GO SOUTH"THEN1100.
385 GOTO381
400 IF SH=1THEN1100
410 GOTO371
900 SW=1
910 GOTO50
950 SH=1
960 GOTO50
1000 RU=1
1010 GOTO50
1050 CR=1
1060 GOTO130
1100 PRINT"YOU HAVE FOUND DRAC'S TREASUR
E.                  WELL DONE."
```

Slicing

From Andrew Davenport in Nottingham.

THIS IS an input and slicing routine for the Spectrum 48K. The routine is in two parts. The first is an input routine that sets CAPS LOCK and will only accept upper-case letters, SPACE and ENTER.

The character codes are poked into memory from 63951 onwards. There is a maximum length of 30 characters.

The string slicing routine takes the first three letters of the first word (the verb) and the first three letters of the last word (the noun) and pokes them at 63981 to 63986 from where strings can be formed.

The code is entered by typing in and running the BASIC loader. The code is activated by typing RANDOMIZE USR 64000. If the input is just ENTER or spaces, the routine will go back to input.

To enter the code type and run the following BASIC loader:

```
10 FOR N = 64000 to 64306
20 INPUT A, IF A<0 OR A>255
THEN GOTO 20
30 POKE N,A: PRINT N,A
40 NEXT N
```

To form string variables from memory type and run this program:

```
10 LET V$ = CHR$ PEEK 63981 + CHR$
   PEEK 63982 + CHR$ PEEK 63983
20 LET N$ = CHR$ PEEK 63984 + CHR$
   PEEK 63985 + CHR$ PEEK 63980
```

Caps shift +0 or 5 will delete a character (listing continues over).

64000	6
64001	3
64002	205
64003	68
64004	14
64005	33
64006	200
64007	249
64008	54
64009	0
64010	33
64011	204
64012	249
64013	54
64014	1
64015	35
64016	54
64017	0
64018	33
64019	106
64020	92
64021	54
64022	0
64023	33
64024	202
64025	249
64026	54
64027	1
64028	35
64029	54
64030	0
64031	1
64032	40
64033	0
64034	33
64035	206
64036	249
64037	175
64038	9
64039	119
64040	11
64041	120
64042	177

FORMAT 40/80 CLUB (BBC disc user group) 5 Marsh Street, Bristol BS1 4AA. Adventure situation always included with monthly club disc. Sample issue £5.50. State drive format.

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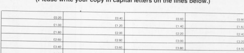
BIZZARRE — a nightmare fantasy. Exciting, fantastical Spectrum 48K Adventure. £4.95! Robsoft, 143 Oakfield Road, Whickham, Newcastle upon Tyrne.

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DISPLAY AD INDEX

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64044	34	64132	215	64220	32
64045	250	64133	241	64221	202
64046	52	64134	42	64222	114
64047	2	64135	204	64223	250
64048	205	64136	249	64224	254
64049	1	64137	17	64225	64
64050	22	64138	206	64226	218
64051	62	64139	249	64227	79
64052	22	64140	25	64228	250
64053	215	64141	119	64229	254
64054	62	64142	42	64230	91
64055	21	64143	204	64231	210
64056	215	64144	249	64232	79
64057	175	64145	35	64233	250
64058	215	64146	34	64234	195
64059	62	64147	204	64235	114
64060	62	64148	249	64236	250
64061	215	64149	17	64237	33
64062	62	64150	10	64238	207
64063	22	64151	0	64239	249
64064	215	64152	33	64240	6
64065	62	64153	225	64241	30
64066	21	64154	0	64242	126
64067	215	64155	205	64243	254
64068	50	64156	181	64244	65
64069	202	64157	3	64245	210
64070	249	64158	195	64246	254
64071	215	64159	46	64247	250
64072	50	64160	250	64248	35
64073	50	64161	58	64249	16
64074	202	64162	202	64250	247
64075	249	64163	249	64251	195
64076	62	64164	254	64252	0
64077	43	64165	3	64253	250
64078	215	64166	218	64254	17
64079	1	64167	79	64255	237
64080	0	64168	250	64256	249
64081	0	64169	61	64257	6
64082	205	64170	50	64258	3
64083	61	64171	202	64259	126
64084	31	64172	249	64260	18
64085	205	64173	62	64261	35
64086	191	64174	22	64262	19
64087	2	64175	215	64263	16
64088	50	64176	62	64264	250
64089	8	64177	21	64265	33
64090	92	64178	215	64266	236
64091	254	64179	58	64267	249
64092	13	64180	202	64268	6
64093	202	64181	249	64269	30
64094	237	64182	215	64270	126
64095	250	64183	61	64271	254
64096	254	64184	50	64272	65
64097	12	64185	202	64273	210
64098	202	64186	249	64274	23
64099	161	64187	62	64275	251
64100	250	64188	32	64276	43
64101	254	64189	215	64277	16
64102	53	64190	42	64278	247
64103	202	64191	204	64279	120
64104	161	64192	249	64280	254
64105	250	64193	1	64281	0
64106	254	64194	206	64282	202
64107	48	64195	249	64283	50
64108	202	64196	9	64284	251
64109	237	64197	54	64285	126
64110	250	64198	0	64286	254
64111	195	64199	58	64287	65
64112	202	64200	204	64288	218
64113	250	64201	249	64289	38
64114	71	64202	61	64290	251
64115	62	64203	50	64291	43
64116	22	64204	204	64292	16
64117	215	64205	249	64293	247
64118	62	64206	195	64294	6
64119	21	64207	149	64295	3
64120	215	64208	250	64296	17
64121	58	64209	71	64297	240
64122	202	64210	58	64298	249
64123	249	64211	202	64299	35
64124	61	64212	249	64300	126
64125	215	64213	254	64301	18
64126	60	64214	32	64302	35
64127	50	64215	202	64303	19
64128	202	64216	79	64304	16
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VISA

ADVENTURE HELP

If you need advice or have some to offer write to Tony Bridge, Adventure Help, Micro Adventurer, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 3LD

TWO LETTERS this month referring to an old classic adventure and a more recent version.

Neil Talbot writes: "I've only been playing Micro Adventures for a month or so (Hobbit, Golden Apple, Planet of Death, Urban Upstart) but my interest goes back a lot further . . .

"Eighteen months ago, to be precise, when I first discovered a version of the original Crowther/Woods adventure on the works computer, and used every available moment to play the game. I was well and truly hooked — even now I still spend the occasional lunchtime exploring the colossal caves, and I've still not exhausted all its possibilities. My problem is . . .

"How do I get across the Troll's Bridge without losing points giving away treasure (ie, is it possible to bribe or cheat him?)."

Also stuck is G Francis: "I am writing to ask if you can solve a few problems I am having with Level 9's Colossal Adventure. I have got to the vending machine but cannot figure out how to get batteries from it. Also, could you tell me if it is possible to cross the canyon? Who is the shadowy figure who is always waving at me? Would you also explain the code in which you give answers?

"A few adventures I can recommend are: Urban Upstart, Valhalla, Knight's Quest and Hewson's excellent Quest. On the subject of Quest, how do you get into the gloomy castle?"

The code, Mr Francis, is this — starting at the *second* letter, read off every *other* letter. When you get to the last letter, return to the *first* letter and repeat the process. The slashes (/) merely break up the letters into groups of four for easier reading. Pass this on to your mates — I'll be using the code many times over the coming months, and I may not have space to go through all this explanation again!

Try it on this, the answer to your Quest question (and I agree with you, it is brilliant — look out for a review in this magazine of the follow-up Fantasia Diamond): TTYO / POEP / OEPN / ETNH SEOD / UOTO / HR. Actually, this convention should be followed each time a door is to be opened. This answer should also be of help to Y E and P F G Paxton of Lincoln who are having trouble in the same place.

As for Colossal Adventure — to get the batteries from the vending machine: SDIR / DOEP / TTHH / EEMC / AOCI / HNIS / NBEE. The shadowy figure is you!

As for Neil's problem (no, I hadn't forgotten you) — to get past the troll: OTLH / DREO / NWET / GHGE / SG. Later in the Adventure, you will need to re-cross the bridge, and then you will have to: RTAH / TRTO / HWET / THRE / OBLE / LA. If you like the Adventure on your mainframe, Neil, try the Level 9 version — it follows the original fairly faithfully, but includes some 70 further locations in the end-game.

Now for some questions that I am passing on for readers' help.

Mr S Rumble of Surrey would like some help in The Mountains of Ket — "How can I get past the Huge Skull and how do I make a hole in the wall with the wand?" R Peet of Notts is stuck in Alice in Wonderland for the MTX 512 — "How do I get past the Guards at the Gate, how do I talk to the Caterpillar, what is Jam and where is it?" These are two adventures that I haven't yet seen, so can some kind person help?

ADVENTURE CONTACT

MICRO Spectrum 48K **Adventure** Denis Through the Drinking Glass **Problem** How do I get out of No 10? **Name** James Gates **Address** 14 Harridge Close, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex.

MICRO BBC **Adventure** Sphynx Adventure **Problem** How do I get past the elephant? **Name** Martyn Hammond **Address** Woodlawn, Bridle Close, Grayshoft, Hindhead, Surrey.

MICRO Commodore 64 **Adventure** Heroes of Karn **Problem** How do you kill the lizard? **Name** Barry Gilbert **Address** 8 Scott Avenue, Stanstead, Abbotts Ware, Herts.

MICRO IBM **Adventure** Zork III **Problem** How do you get out of the room behind the mirror and how do I cross the lake without losing all? **Name** Steven Elliott **Address** 118 Oxford Rd, Cambridge.

MICRO Spectrum 48K **Adventure** Knights Quest **Problem** I can't get past the small cleft. **Name** Steven Archer **Address** 21 Chapter Rd, Strood, Rochester, Kent.

MICRO Spectrum 48K **Adventure** Classic Adventure **Problem** How to open the rusty door, north of the giant room? **Name** David Ross **Address** Maryville, off Farm Lane, All Stretton, Shrops.

MICRO BBC B **Adventure** The Hobbit **Problem** What use is the golden key and what is the use of the chest? How do you lift the chest? **Name** Robert Towell **Address** Farm View, Vicarage Rd, Great Hockham, Thetford, Norfolk.

MICRO CBM 64 **Adventure** Snowball **Problem** Where is the spacesuit that you are supposed to assemble? **Name** A. McLuckie **Address** Hafod-Y-Bryn, Llanbedr, Nr. Barmouth, Gwynedd, North Wales.

MICRO Spectrum **Adventure** Knight's Quest **Problem** Do I need to enter the deserted wastelands? I have a rope, compass, book, horse and other items. **Name** Paul Watcyns **Address** 16 Gore St, Newport, Gwent.

MICRO Atari 400 **Adventure** Golden Baton **Problem** I have got the salt and slugs, but the crab isn't interested. I'd be grateful for help. **Name** C. Haywood **Address** 15 Nelson Rd, Beeston, Rylands, Nottingham.

That's all there's room for this month — more in July.

HAVE YOU BEEN staring at the screen for days, or given up in disgust, stuck in an adventure whose problems seem insurmountable? Adventure Contact may be the answer. This column is designed to put adventurers in touch with one another. When you're stumped a fellow adventurer may be able to help — and you may be able to solve other people's problems. If you are having difficulties with an adventure, fill in this coupon and send it to Adventure Contact, Micro Adventurer, 12/13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 3LD. We will publish Adventure Contact entries each month in this special column.

Micro ....

Adventure ....

Problem ....

....

....

Name ....

Address ....

....



COMPETITION CORNER

Tony Roberts tests your skill — send your answers to Competition Corner, Micro Adventurer, 12-13 Little Newport St, London WC2R 3LD

This month Legend gives Spectrum owners a chance to win twenty copies of its award winning game Valhalla

Hunt is on to find the E ring for Tisch

GOOD THINGS have been happening to you since last month when you found the fourth Runic ring.

Tisch, the black dragon, has enlarged your prison quarters and has filled them with superb treasures that she seems to have no trouble obtaining with her steadily increasing powers.

Now she wants you to fetch her the fifth — the E — Runic ring. It's in the E-shaped building. Tisch says that she can thought-transfer you into the room of your choice to retrieve the ring. She can even give you a minds-eye view of each of the five rooms.

On this page are the views, a plan and the outside view of the E-shaped building. There seem to be some rather unpleasant occupants in some of the rooms. Into which room do you wish Tisch to deposit you?

As a tie-breaker complete the following sentence in 15 words or less: I want to own a copy of Valhalla because. . .

Your entry must arrive by the last working day in June.

The winners and solution will be printed in the August issue. Entries will not be acknowledged and we cannot enter into correspondence on the result.

The winners of our April competition are Julian Murgatroyd of Alcester, J D Neilson of Thurso, Ron Greenwood of Bexley, Myra Noble of London, Karen Hurrell of Norwich, E Peacock of Southport, D Stanford of Kinross, D A Greasby of Wilferfoss, A Hirst of Wakefield, Martyn Norton of Sutton Coldfield, Stuart Cullen of King's Lynn, E H Furnival of Rochdale, D Brain of Liverpool, and a mystery person from Bude.

Each will be receiving a copy of either Champions or The Boss from Peaksoft. The answer was emeralds and opals only — unfortunately the other maze-runners were caught by the troll.

Above: external view of the E shaped building, alongside: plan of the building, far left and below: internal views of each of the five rooms

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